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INSPECTOR KOZABURO HIMURO

Kozaburo Himuro is the reclusive head of Special Unit A (aka the Crypt). From within his secluded headquarters, Himuro uses his genius intellect and understanding of the criminal mind to help solve the most heinous and bizarre cases. Due to mysterious events in his past, he is incapable of leaving the Crypt to face the world and his own personal demons.

DETECTIVE KURUMI AYAKI

As Inspector Himuro's eyes and ears outside the Crypt, Kurumi Ayaki helps investigate the gruesome crimes assigned to Special Unit A. Although completely out of her element, Ayaki's heart and determination help compensate for her lack of practical experience. It is Ayaki's emotional tenacity combined with Himuro's cold logic that may be the team's greatest asset.

Previously in REMOTE...

Former meter maid Kurumi Ayaki's stint with the Metropolitan Police Department's Special Unit A has proven to be anything but dull. Working directly under the reclusive Inspector Himuro Kozaburo, Ayaki aids him in his efforts to solve the city's most heinous crimes. From killer clowns to mad bombers to lethal stalkers, no crime is too bizarre, no criminal too crafty.

But, recently, the line between Kurumi's professional and personal life has begun to blur. First, there was the stalker of Shingo's ex-girlfriend who was brutally murdered at the beach resort. Then, an old high school friend of Kurumi's was horribly murdered after a sordid career as a Fuzoku girl in Japan's sex industry. And immediately after, as Shingo and Kurumi were on their way to relax at a mountain spa, a random flat tire embroils the couple in yet another murder! Finally, the two arrive at the serenity of the spa—but can trouble be far behind?

Remote Vol. 8
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A TOKYOPOP Manga

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English publication rights arranged through Kodansha Ltd.
English text copyright © 2006 TOKYOPOP Inc.

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ISBN: 1-59532-811-4

First TOKYOPOP printing: January 2006

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada

.remote.

VOLUME 8

WRITER - SEIMARU AMAGI

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TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

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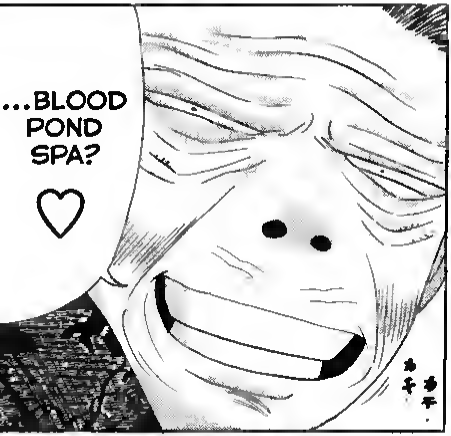
FILE 69
MURDER AT THE BLOOD POND SPA HIDEAWAY
I'M GOING TO HAVE TO AGREE WITH YOU, SHINGO.
WELL... I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU... ♡
...BUT I HOPE... ...THE REST OF OUR TRIP IS LESS EVENTFUL.
HOW CAN I NOT?!
IT'S A UNISEX BATHING SPA--
UH, I MEAN...!
BASH!
HEH.. WE DON'T WANT TO WASTE OUR PAID VACATION, SO...
I SENSE SOMETHING SINISTER AT WORK HERE.
Not a day earlier we faced down a murderous psychopath...
SHINGO...
...yet here we were, trying to salvage our romantic getaway.
I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR BEING SUCH A GREAT SPORT... ESPECIALLY AFTER WHAT WE JUST WENT THROUGH!
And so we continued on to Shingo's mysterious mountain spa...
...THERE'S NO WAY I'M CANCELING OUR TRIP!

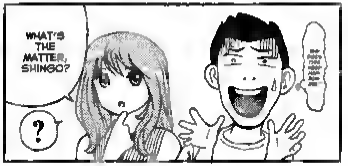
Chapter 8
Murder at the Blood Pond Spa

HERE WE ARE!
THE BLOOD POND SPA!
WHAAAAT?!
BLOOD POND SPA? SOMEONE NEEDS A NEW MARKETING DEPART-MENT...
COOL, HUH? AND GET THIS...THE OUTSIDE SPA IS A--
!
MR. KAMISHIMA AND MS. AYAKI, AM I RIGHT?
WELCOME, YOU TWO...

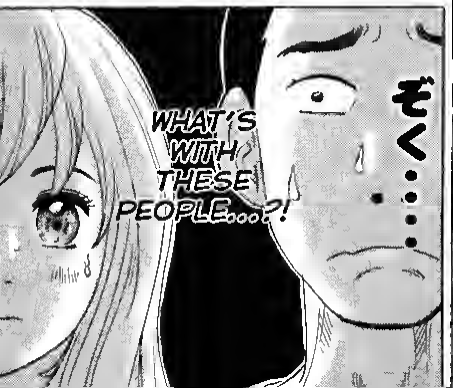
YES...
PLEASE, COME IN. YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM THE LONG TRIP.
HONEY, ARE THEY HERE?
Toki Kumada (72)
Owner of the Inn Genta Kumada (72)
YOU HAVE OTHER GUESTS TONIGHT...?
UM...
HM...?
JEEZ... THE DEAD WALK...
UH... NICE TO MEET YOU.
HUH?
A MINI-BUS?!
OH, YES... IT'S NOT OFTEN WE HAVE A GROUP.
IT'S A SMALL GROUP... ONLY FIVE OR SIX.
HEH HEH HEH...

ガーン
...I CAN'T BATHE WITH KURUMI ALONE!
NOOOO! THAT MEANS...


...BLOOD POND SPA?
♡


WHAT'S THE MATTER, SHINGO?
?

WE'LL SERVE DINNER WHEN-EVER YOU'RE READY...
...BUT PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE A BATH FIRST?


ぞく……
WHAT'S WITH THESE PEOPLE...?!

IN OUR FAMOUS...

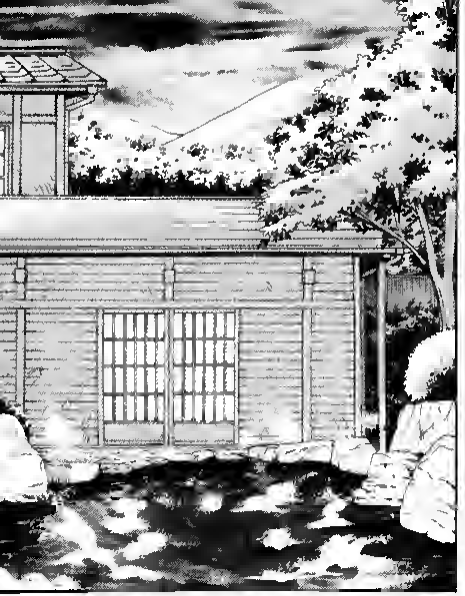
THIS IS THE BLOOD POND SPA?!
IT REALLY DOES LOOKS LIKE BLOOD...

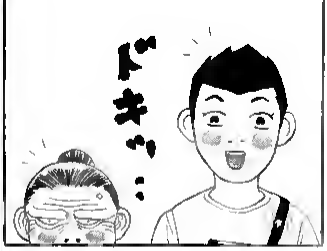
血池湯
RED WATER?

I TOLD YOU ON THE PHONE...
...THIS IS AN OLD FASHIONED INN!
TOMO-SAN?
YEP, ISN'T THAT RIGHT
AND YOU SAY THEY ONLY ALLOW MIXED BATHING?

STILL... AFTER THE LONG DRIVE, WOULDN'T THE SPA FEEL GREAT?
UH...I GUESS I WAS MISTAKEN... HEH...

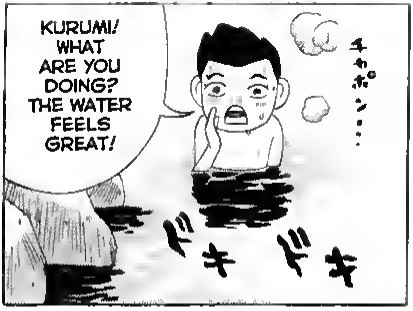
I GUESS NOT.
...THERE SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM WITH US BATHING TOGETHER, RIGHT?
...
IF WE WRAP OURSELVES WITH TOWELS...

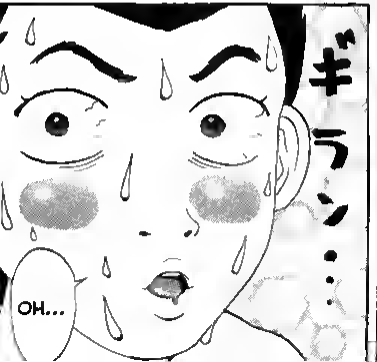


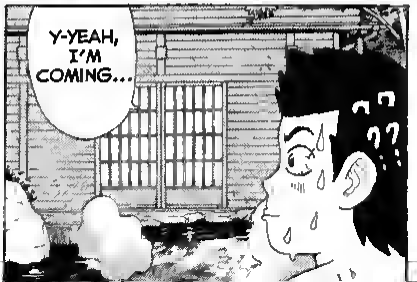

ドキッ…

OW OW OW OW…
LUCKY YOU!
HOO!
GRANNY, YOU'RE JUST SHORT ENOUGH TO ELBOW ME…
HUH? HUH?
ISN'T SHE CUTE?

ペッ


KURUMI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THE WATER FEELS GREAT!
チャポン…
ドキドキ


ギラン…
OH…


Y-YEAH, I'M COMING…

WOW, EVEN THE ROCKS ARE RED.
IT'S SO BIG...
IS IT HOT?
ヒタ
ヒーン
N-NO, IT'S NOT TOO HOT.
OH YEAH!
OH, YEAH! IT'S JUST PER-FECT.
WHEW
TOLD YA. ♡
WOO HOO! ♡

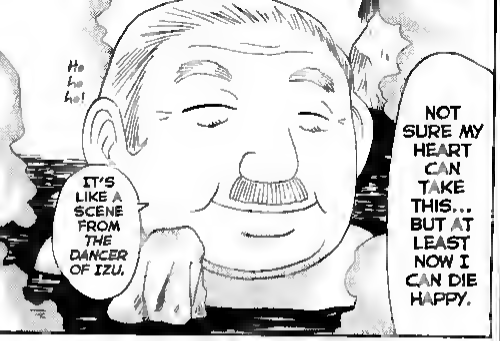
SO... IS THIS A UNIQUE GET-AWAY, OR WHAT?
IT'S REALLY COOL, SHINGO. I'M GLAD WE CAME.
THERE'S A MINERAL IN THE ROCKS THAT TURNS THEM RED...
...AND THAT'S WHY THE WATER LOOKS LIKE BLOOD.
He read it in a magazine.
THE ROCKS AT SHIRAHONE HOT SPRINGS IN NAGANO ARE WHITE FOR THE SAME REASON.
IT USED TO BE CALLED SHIRA-FUNE...
...BUT BECAME SHIRAHONE LATER.
Babbling stupidly, gaze locked.
WOW, YOU KNOW A LOT.
HEY... DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
HUH?
RE-ALLY?
Lantooth
YEAH... I'M SURE OF IT...
OH...!

OH! WE AREN'T THE ONLY GUESTS?
AND I...
...AM WEARING A SWIMSUIT!
Akari Mizuki (18)
UH... HI.
HI...
DAMN. NO PRIVACY.
DON'T BE SO SELF-CONSCIOUS, HONEY.
YOU'RE COVERED WITH A TOWEL ..

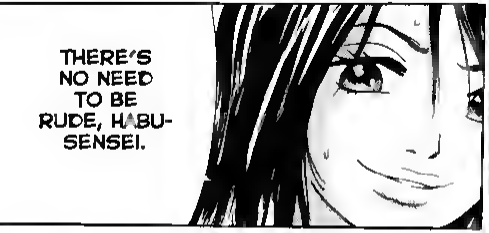
YOU'RE ONLY AS OLD AS YOU FEEL, YASUOKA-SENSEI.
HA HA HA.
Kenzou Habu (48)
HO HO HO HO. GOOD THING TOO... I'M NOT SURE MY OLD HEART COULD TAKE THE EXCITE-MENT!
Junnosuke Yasuoka (78)
HO HO HO. WISE MOVE. YOU CAN'T DEBATE AN 18-YEAR-OLD GENIUS.
I PLEAD THE FIFTH..
OH, WELL...
IS THAT WHY I SAW YOU STARING AT MY ASS, HABU-SENSEI?
ADMIT IT.
WHAT KIND OF GROUP IS THIS?
AN OLD MAN, A MIDDLE-AGED MAN AND AN 18-YEAR-OLD GIRL?

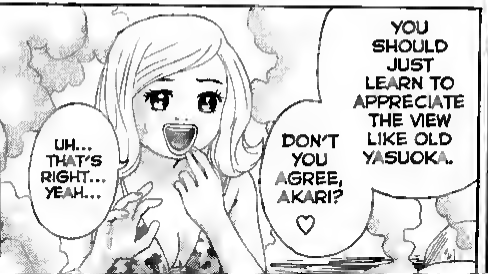
UH... SO, IS THIS A COMPANY TRIP...
...OR SOME-THING?
HUH?
...TWO OLD FOSSILS.
HEY!
HO HO HO. SHE'S RIGHT.
OH, I SEE. YEAH, WE MUST LOOK LIKE A STRANGE GROUP.
A YOUNG GIRL LIKE ME AND...
WE ARE...
CLIP

HUH?
HO!♡
!
OH.♡
!
HI, THERE.
GOD LIKES ME! HE REALLY, REALLY LIKES ME!
♡
OH, MY GOODNESS!


He he he!
IT'S LIKE A SCENE FROM THE DANCER OF IZU.
NOT SURE MY HEART CAN TAKE THIS... BUT AT LEAST NOW I CAN DIE HAPPY.

BEING COMPLETELY WITHOUT INHIBITIONS IS PART OF HER CHARM.
YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ISHIZUKA'S BOLDNESS.


THERE'S NO NEED TO BE RUDE, HABU-SENSEI.


UH... THAT'S RIGHT... YEAH...
DON'T YOU AGREE, AKARI? ♡
YOU SHOULD JUST LEARN TO APPRECIATE THE VIEW LIKE OLD YASUOKA.

WHAT'S THIS? I THOUGHT WE WERE THE ONLY ONES HERE.
I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WERE OTHER GUESTS...
Maria Ishizuka (28)

OH, DADDY LIKE...
DAMMIT, SHINGO!
BE A LITTLE MORE OBVIOUS, WHY DON'T YOU?
DUUHH...
SORRY IF I OFFENDED YOU BOTH...
OOOH, THIS FEELS SOOOO GOOD.
OH...! NOT AT ALL!

SHE'S IN HER ROOM. SHE SAID SHE HAD SOME WORK TO DO.
SAY, WHERE'S FUMIKO?
NOW, NOW. SHE'S WORKING VERY HARD, ARRANGING THIS MEETING FOR US.
THAT GIRL IS SUCH A WET BLANKET. SHE NEEDS TO GET LAID.
OH!!
Out of the frying pan, into the fire...
WHAT DO THEY DO FOR A LIVING?
WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE THESE?

THAT'S QUITE A TATTOO!
A BIG PEONY FLOWER. COULD SHE BE...YAKUZA?
ハッ!
OH SHINGO...WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE HAVE YOU GOTTEN US MIXED UP WITH THIS TIME?

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08:/

STORY_BY:SEIMARU_AMAGI

ART_BY:TETSUYA_KOSHIBA

EXPLICIT CONTENT
PARENTAL ADVISORY
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METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
UNSOLVED CASE REPORT

GENERAL INFORMATION

Case file number	Previous officer assigned	Officer J. Chen
JOB-401	Current officer assigned	Officer K. Ayaki

Investigation status

Officer Kurumi Reporting.

Finally, my fiancé and I are taking a well-deserved vacation to the Blood Pond Spa to clear our heads—a little time to ourselves in the mountains. But psychopaths never want to take a holiday from me. Shingo and I arrive at the spa, where we run into a group of writers who, innocuously enough, are here for an awards ceremony. When one of the scribes suddenly turns up as Best Dead Novelist, everyone else is...well, everyone else is a suspect.

Later, a murder threat is sent into the Metropolitan Police Department. The instructions are simple: Go to the Ghost Building at midnight on November 10, and someone will die. I'll give you one guess who Inspector Himuro orders to be the lucky volunteer...

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MAYBE WHEN YOU'RE A LITTLE OLDER, KID. ♡
HMPH.
?
WHAT?!
File 70
MURDER AT THE BLOOD POND SPA
SWIMMING WITH SHARKS
IT'S SOOO COOL! I WANT A TATTOO, TOO. ♡
WHEN DID YOU GET THAT, MARIA-SENSEI? ♡
"IN THE STEAM OF THE SPA...
...BLOOMS THE RED PEONY BLOSSOM..."
HMM.
...BY JUNNOSUKE YASUOKA.
?
JU...
A PEONY... WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
SENSEI...?

SOMETIMES HE WRITES REVIEWS ON THE MAGAZINE I WORK FOR. HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!
YEAH... HE'S AN OLD-TIMEY NOVELIST. HE MOSTLY JUDGES WRITING CONTESTS THESE DAYS.
JUN-NOSUKE YASUO-KA?!
WHAT? DO YOU KNOW HIM, SHINGO?
THAT TATTOOED BEAUTY MUST BE THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR...
...MARIA ISHIZUKA!!
YOU'VE HEARD OF HER, RIGHT? SHE USED TO BE A FUZOKU GIRL...
I THINK SHE WAS NOMINATED FOR THIS YEAR'S AKUTAGAWA AWARD.
OH... WOW!
THAT'S IMPRESSIVE.

IT'S AN INSULT THAT HER CHEAP, *TAWDRY* NOVEL SHOULD BE NOMINATED BESIDE *MY* GREAT WORK!
A FUZOKU GIRL TURNED NOVELIST...
HUMPH! IT WAS MORE THAT *BODY* OF HERS THAT LANDED THE NOMINATION THAN HER WRITING!
UH, WELL...
SO HE'S A NOVELIST, TOO.
HEY, I'M AN AKUTAGAWA AWARD NOMINEE, TOO. ♡
TSK!
I'M GONNA BE THE YOUNGEST WINNER EVER! ♡
I'M AKARI MIZUKI, AUTHOR OF THE INTERNET NOVEL, *SEVENTEEN!* ♡

THEY'RE ALL FAMOUS NOVELISTS!
WOW! I'M SITTING WITH A GROUP OF AKUTAGAWA AWARD NOMINEES!
THAT OLD MAN... YOU SAID HE'S A NOVELIST AS WELL?
OR A NOMINEE?
NO, HE HASN'T WRITTEN ANY NEW NOVELS LATELY.
HE'S A JUDGE.
THE OTHER THREE ARE...
EXCUSE ME...

ARE YOU TWO COMING BACK FROM THE SPA?
UM...
Editor
Fumiko Kawade (26)
YOU DIDN'T SEE TWO OLDER MEN AND TWO YOUNG WOMEN THERE, BY ANY CHANCE?

I DO HOPE THEY WEREN'T RUDE TO YOU TWO.
MAYBE JUST A BIT...
HEY!
BUT THEN, WHO AM I TO JUDGE? CREATIVE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY WRITERS, USUALLY ARE A BIT ECCENTRIC.
Fumiko Kawade
Editor
Sundansha Co.
I'M FUMIKO KAWADE. I'M AN EDITOR FROM SUNDANSHA.
YOU'RE A WRITER?
WELL...
MY NAME IS SHINGO KAMISHIMA.
NICE TO MEET YOU!
UM... I'M ACTUALLY A WRITER, TOO...
?!
HUH?
THIS MAY BE A LUCKY DAY FOR US BOTH...

YOU SEE, PART OF MY COMPANY'S PROJECT...
...IS TO INVITE THESE THREE NOMINEES OF THE AKUTAGAWA AWARD, AND THE LEAD JUDGE, YASUOKA-SENSEI, TO THIS SPA...
...FOR A GROUP INTERVIEW.
I SEE...
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE, TO OVERSEE THE ARTICLE.
SHE SEEMS NERVOUS...
BUT BECAUSE OF THE THUNDERSTORM THIS AFTERNOON... AND THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN...
...OUR REPORTER COULDN'T MAKE IT.
SO IF YOU DON'T MIND...
...COULD YOU POSSIBLY DO THE INTERVIEW FOR US? YOU'LL BE WELL COMPENSATED, OF COURSE!
>< YES!! ♡
WHAT?! ME?! YES, OF COURSE!!
WHAT...?

NOW WAIT JUST A OAMN MINUTE HERE! THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OUR VACATION, ANO WITH ALL THE CRAP YOU GIVE ME ABOUT MY JOB INTERFERING WITH OUR PERSONAL LIFE, YOU JUST ACCEPT THIS JOB WITHOUT EVEN OISCUSS-ING IT WITH ME?!
GASP!
HE...HE LOOKS SO SWEET... SO WHY AM I STILL SO MAD AT HIM?
I'M REALLY, REALLY SORRY, KURUMI
♡♡
THIS IS A BIG OPPOR-TUNITY FOR ME!
I'M SORRY, KURUMI... I AM...BUT LOOK AT THIS FROM MY POINT OF VIEW.
WELL, THEN NO MORE COMPLAIN-ING ABOUT MY JOB! GOT IT?

FIRST... I'D LIKE TO HEAR HOW YOUR FEELINGS ON BEING NOMINATED
ONE BY ONE...
I KNOW! NOVELISTS SURE HAVE A LUXURIOUS LIFESTYLE!
LOOK AT THIS GORGEOUS DINNER...

I'M SORRY FOR DISTURBING YOUR VACATION LIKE THIS, AYAKI-SAN...
HA HA!
REALLY? SO WHOSE TEETH WERE THEY?
OH, YOU DON'T NEED TO APOLOGIZE.
I SHOULD BE THANKING YOU FOR THIS GREAT DINNER...
CRASH
WHAT DID YOU SAY, YOU FILTHY SLUT?!
...
?!
HABU-SENSEI! WHA-WHAT HAPPENED...?
SHUT UP!

WHORE? YOUR SKILLS AT POLITE DINNER CONVERSATION LEAVE MUCH TO BE DESIRED.
DID I SAY SOMETHING UNTRUE?
ALL I SAID WAS THAT NO ONE READS HABU-SENSEI'S BOOKS ANYMORE, AND THE SALES PROVE IT. ♡
THAT'S WHAT!
THIS FUCKIN WHORE INSULTE ME!
SALES? HOW VULGAR.
YOU'RE AS CRUDE AS HE IS.
HOW... DARE... YOU?
SO...
...THE CHILDREN'S CAUCUS WEIGHS IN. DO LEARN TO BE QUIET WHEN ADULTS ARE SPEAKING, WON'T YOU, GIRL?

BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE THEY'RE GOING TO GIVE THE AWARD TO SOME WET BEHIND-THE-EARS CHILD, BREATH STILL SMELLING OF SIMILAC!
THE ONLY REASON YOU'VE GOTTEN ANY PRESS IS BECAUSE YOU'RE A KID, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY LEVEL OF TALENT. WELL, YOU WON'T BE YOUNG FOR LONG, SWEETHEART. ONCE THE NOVELTY WEARS OFF, THEN WHAT WILL YOU HAVE TO FALL BACK ON?
EEP!
THAT'S BIG TALK COMING FROM SOME USED-UP DLO TRAMP!
H"
AT LEAST IF I WIN IT WILL BE BECAUSE OF MY WRITING, NOT BECAUSE I WENT DOWN ON EVERY JUDGE WHO WAS HOPPED UP ON ENOUGH VIAGRA TO GET IT UP!

MAYBE THIS WILL COOL DOWN THAT HOT TEMPER!
EEEK!
OH... OH NO...
PLEASE! EVERYONE, PLEASE CALM DOWN!
PLEASE!
HOW DARE YOU?
LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, YOU SAGGY OLD SLUT...YOUR RAG ISN'T EVEN A REAL NOVEL!
YOU REWORK A COUPLE OF INCIDENTS FROM YOUR DAYS AS A PROFESSIONAL PECKERHOLSTER, AND THAT'S SUPPOSED TO MEAN SOMETHING?
HEH.
IT'S CALLED LIFE EXPERIENCE, KID. YOU'LL RECOGNIZE IT WHEN YOU GET SOME.

!
.....
THE ONLY WEAPON IN YOUR ARSENAL IS YOUR YOUTH AND LOOKS. ONCE YOU GET A LITTLE OLDER AND YOUR TITS HIT THE FLOOR, NO ONE'S GOING TO GIVE A FAT FRENCHMAN'S ASS ABOUT ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO SAY.
GO TO HELL, YOU BITCH!
ガン
MI-MIZUKI-SEN-SEI...?!
YOU'LL GET YOURS, WHORE...

I'LL FUCK-ING KILL YOU!
REMEM-BER THAT, BITCH!!
COME TALK TO ME WHEN YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO BE OFF MOMMA'S TIT!
GYAH HA HA HA!
MIZUKI-SENSEI! PLEASE WAIT!

YASUOKA-SENSEI, I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO SEE THAT! SUCH A LACK OF CLASS!
HARDLY THE TYPE WHO DESERVE THE HIGHEST AWARD IN LITERATURE!
HMPH!
HE'S RIGHT, MARIA. THIS ENTIRE DISPLAY WAS MOST UNSEEMLY!
AND IN FRONT OF THE PRESS, NO LESS!
DON'T TAKE THAT TONE WITH ME, YASUOKA-SENSEI.
WOULDN'T IT BE TERRIBLE IF THE LITERARY WORLD WERE TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR WEIRD LITTLE SEX HABITS? AND YOU, SUCH A RESPECTED PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY! ♡
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT STABBING ME IN THE BACK! YOU'RE RIGHT... THERE'S AN INTERVIEWER HERE.

THIS IS RIDICU-LOUS!
THIS...
THINK ABOUT IT!
WHA--
WHAT?!
GOOD DAY!
THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT TO COME TO A MEETING LIKE THIS!
...I THOUGHT SO...
HEH.
SO... THAT WENT WELL, DON'T YOU THINK?

チン・・・
TOMORROW FOR SURE... YES!
NO SIR, I...
YES, I'M SORRY...
OH...I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT THAT!
WHAT?
YOUR BOSS MUST BE REALLY UPSET. I'M SORRY THINGS WENT THE WAY THEY DID.
REALLY?
...LOOKS LIKE HE HAS A WEAKNESS FOR ISHIZUKA...
...IT'S ALREADY BEEN DECIDED THAT ISHIZUKA-SENSEI IS GOING TO WIN THE AWARD.
THIS IS JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME, BUT...
EVEN YASUOKA-SENSEI...
ISHIZUKA IS ALWAYS TROUBLE.
THAT DINNER WAS A BAD IDEA.

SO THE RACE IS FIXED?
BASED ENTIRELY ON YASUOKA-SENSEI'S RECOMMENDATION...
THOSE TWO...
THEY HAVE NO IDEA THAT THEY HAVE NO CHANCE.
WHAT A BUNCH OF MORONS.

WELL, AS LONG AS THEY MAKE ME LOOK GOOD...

OH MY GOD!
WHAT AN ANGLE TO SHOOT!
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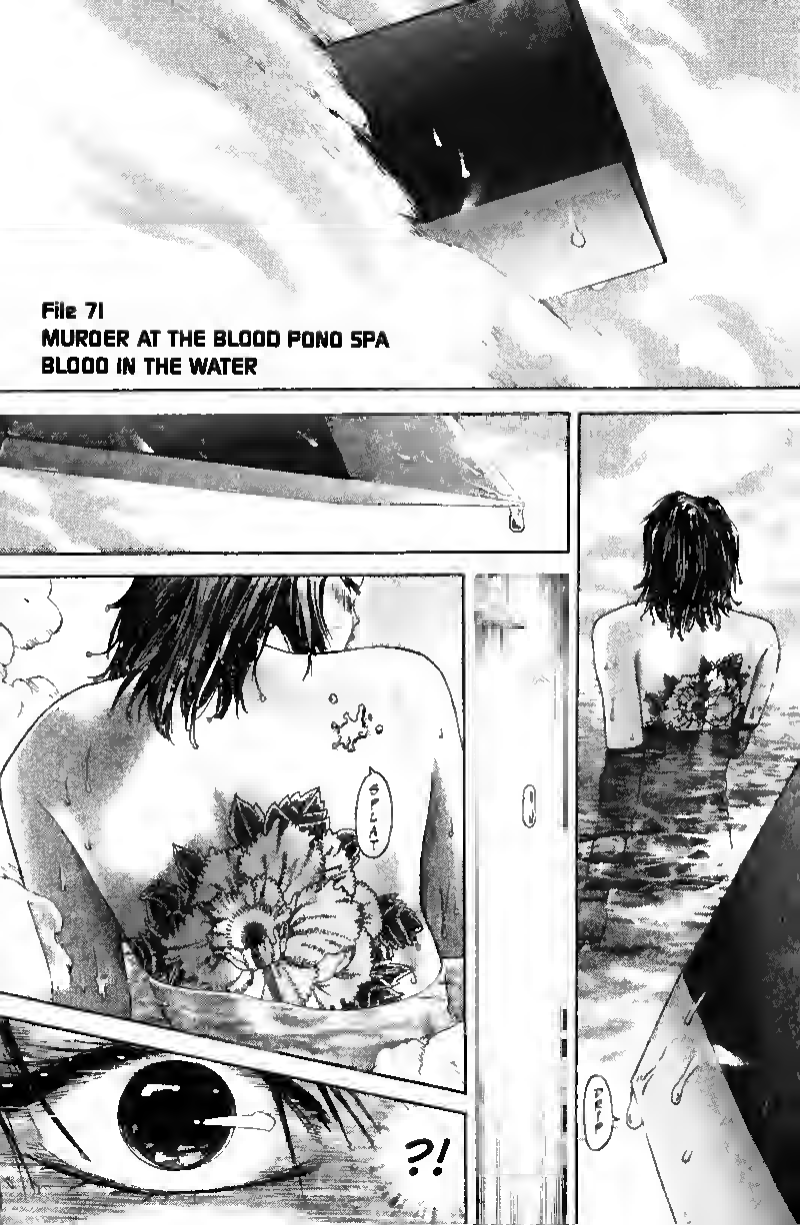
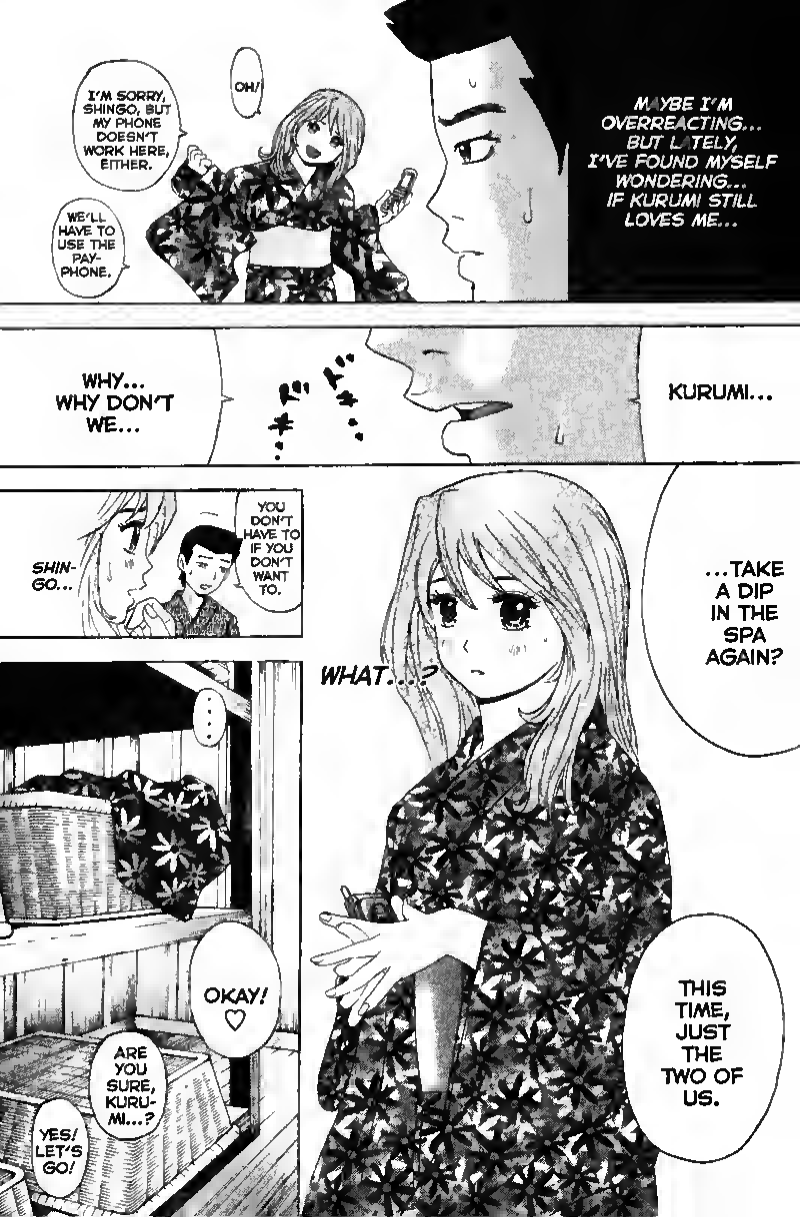

File 71
MURDER AT THE BLOOD PONO SPA
BLOOD IN THE WATER
SPLAT
?!
?

MY CELL PHONE DOESN'T WORK IN HERE!
Out of area
HEY, WHAT THE HELL?
HM?
I WAS GOING TO REPORT TODAY'S "INTERVIEW" TO MY BOSS!
HOW ABOUT YOUR PHONE?
JUST A SEC-OND...
...HM?
...I CAN'T FIND IT!
...SHINGO...
I THINK I LEFT IT IN THE CHANGING ROOM...
OKAY, LET'S GO CHECK
OKAY.

IF THEY FIND OUT THAT I LOST IT...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! IT'S FROM THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION UNIT!
IT'S MY EQUIPMENT!
HIMURO ...!!
WELL, HE'LL GIVE YOU A NEW ONE, RIGHT? WE CAN'T USE IT HERE ANYWAY...
OH MY GOD... IF I LOSE IT, INSPECTOR HIMURO WILL BE SO MAD!
HERE IT IS! THANK GOD!
HEY!
CLINK
HMPH!
WE'RE HERE FOR A VACATION, KURUMI! STOP TALKING ABOUT INSPECTOR HIMURO ALREADY...
I COULDN'T HAVE FACED INSPECTOR HIMURO IF I HAD LOST THIS...


I'M SORRY, SHINGO, BUT MY PHONE DOESN'T WORK HERE, EITHER.
OH!
WE'LL HAVE TO USE THE PAY-PHONE.
MAYBE I'M OVERREACTING... BUT LATELY, I'VE FOUND MYSELF WONDERING... IF KURUMI STILL LOVES ME...
WHY... WHY DON'T WE...
KURUMI...
SHIN-GO...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
WHAT...?
...TAKE A DIP IN THE SPA AGAIN?
THIS TIME, JUST THE TWO OF US.
OKAY! ♡
ARE YOU SURE, KURU-MI...?
YES! LET'S GO!

ガラ・
ドキッ・
!
SHINGO... SOMEONE TOOK ALL THE LARGE TOWELS...
...AND THESE SMALLER ONES DON'T COVER MUCH...
...SO NO PEEKING, OKAY?
!!
チキィーン
GAAH! THINK ABOUT BASE-BALL!
GLANCE

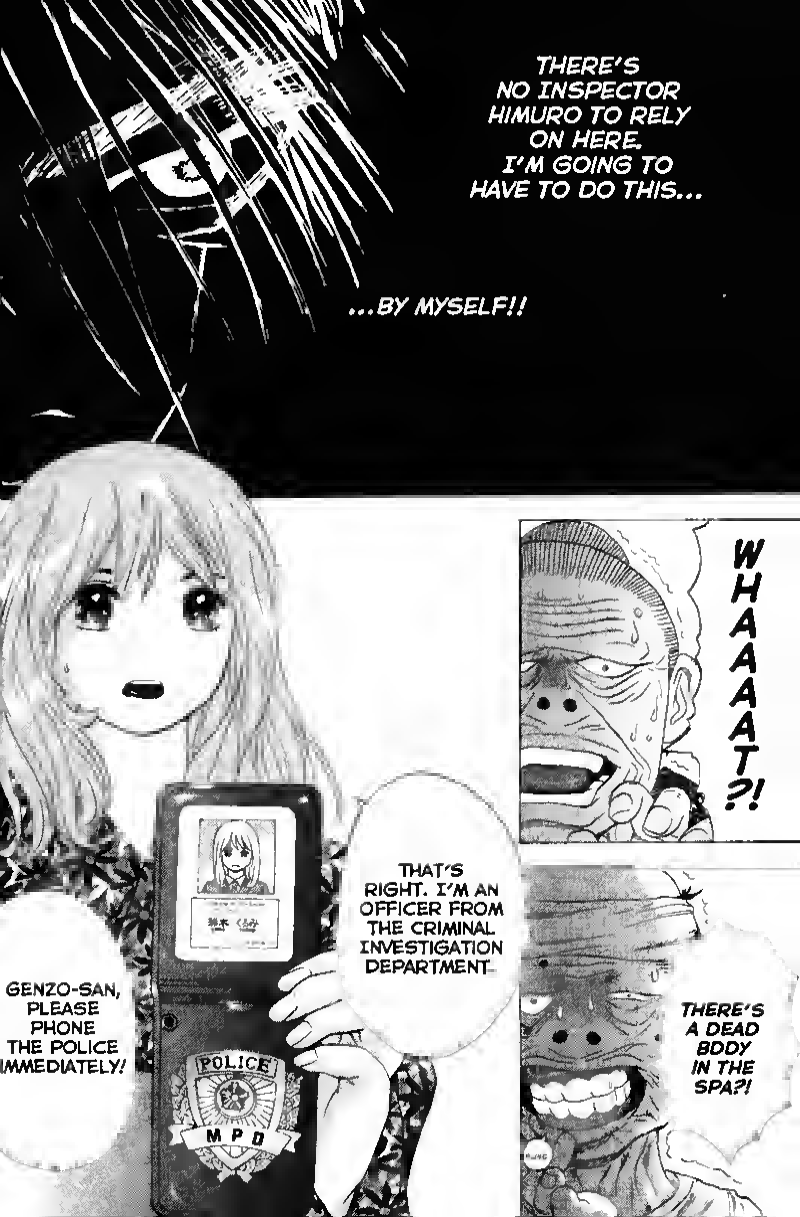
SHE TOTALLY JUST SAW MY BONER!
OH, SHIT!
GASP!
SHE'S GETTING PALE AND SHAKING?
WHAT?
NO.
BUT WHY?
DON'T WE USUALLY GET RED WHEN WE'RE EMBAR-RASSED...?
WELL, THIS ISN'T THE REACTION I WAS HOPING FOR ON THE UNVEILING OF THE MIGHTY THOR...
NOOOOOO!!
I-I'M SORRY, KURUMI.
I DON'T MEAN TO BE CRUDE, BUT. .
...WELL, IT'S JUST YOU LOOK SO HOT, AND...
NO...
NO...

HOLY SHIT! ARE THEY DEAD?!
IS IT A DEAD BODY?!
D-DEAD?
SWEET FUCKING KRISHNA ON FIRE! IS THAT A BODY?!
IT'S MARIA ISHIZUKA!
THE TATTOO...!!

LOOK...! LOOK BEHIND YOU...! IN THE SPA!!
WHAT?

!!
SH-SHINGO! WAIT!
SOME ONE HELP!
SHINGO! DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE!
EEEEE!
I'LL GO GET SOME-ONE!
WHY DOES THIS KEEP HAPPEN-ING TO ME?!
WHAT DO I DO?
EEEEEEEEE!
BLOOD... BLOOOOD!

SHIT! I FORGOT, THERE'S NO SIGNAL UP HERE...
GOTTA CALL INSPECTOR HIMURO...
CALM DOWN, GIRL. FOCUS.
THIS ISN'T ANYTHING I HAVEN'T DEALT WITH BEFORE...
I'M A COP FROM SPECIAL UNIT A.
YOU'RE HIRED.
WELCOME TO SPECIAL UNIT A.


THERE'S NO INSPECTOR HIMURO TO RELY ON HERE. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DO THIS...
...BY MYSELF!!
WHAAAAT?!
GENZO-SAN, PLEASE PHONE THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY!
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M AN OFFICER FROM THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT.
POLICE
M P D
THERE'S A DEAD BODY IN THE SPA?!

ALL RIGHT. LET'S FIND FUMIKO...
...AND ASK ABOUT THE LAST TIME SHE SAW ISHIZUKA-SAN.
SHE'S SO SEXY WHEN SHE TAKES CHARGE... ♡♡
I CALLED THE POLICE...BUT THE ROAD IS WASHED OUT FROM THE RAIN-STORM. IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS IN THE DARK. THEY CAN'T MAKE IT UNTIL MORNING.
THEN MAYBE I CAN FIGURE OUT...
...WHO WAS THE LAST PERSON TO SEE MARIA ISHIZUKA ALIVE!

WHAAAAAT?!
ISHIZUKA-SENSEI IS DEAD?! YOU...YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!
IT'S TRUE. NOW PLEASE, COME WITH ME.
OKAY.
CLICK
WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE OUT HERE? DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT--
MI--MIZUKI-SENSEI!
ISHIZUKA-SENSEI IS...
!
D-DEAD?!
YOU'RE KIDDING ME!!

WHAAT?! SHE'S DEAD ...?
WHA?!
HABU-SENSEI?
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU GUYS ALL DOING OUT HERE?
I...I'LL GO TELL YASUOKA-SENSEI... I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU.
OKAY, HABU-SEN-SEI.
THANK YOU.
I WANT EVERYONE OUT AT THE SPA RIGHT NOW!
花
HELLO?!
YASUOKA-SENSEI!
YA--
YASUOKA-SENSEI!

?!!
EEEEEK! L-LOOK!
!
NO...! SHE WAS FLOATING RIGHT THERE!
THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
WHERE'S THE BODY...?
UH... WHAT?

OH MY GOD! YOU'RE RIGHT!
THE ROCK IS COVERED WITH BLOOD!!
SHE'S DEAD! OMIGOD, SHE'S REALLY DEAD!
!!
EXCUSE ME!
I-I'LL CHECK ISHIZUKA-SENSEI'S ROOM!
HUH...?
SHE'S NOT HERE!
THERE'S A MESSAGE ON THE COMPUTER...
SEN-SEI!
SEN-SEI! ARE YOU HERE?

!!
A gentle flower peony prefers the stream over the blood pond
A HAIKU?!
?!
YA--YASUO-KA-SEN-SEI!
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN...?
I HEARD ABOUT IT FROM HABU-KUN.
A STREAM?
WHAT A POOR HAIKU...

WHERE IS IT?!
WHAT?
WAIT... IS THAT REFERRING TO THE STREAM WE WENT FISHING IN...
...THIS MORNING?
STREAM...
I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST HER TO HAVE ENGINEERED THIS ENTIRE FARCE.
COUNT ME OUT.
MARIA IS A TROUBLE-MAKER.
IT'S TEN MINUTES BY FOOT...
LET'S GO!
I THINK THIS IS WHERE WE WERE THIS MORNING...
HEY!!
WHAT? SO LATE AT NIGHT?

EEEEEEEK!!
I-ISHIZUKA-SENSEI!!
ALL RIGHT, KURUMI... YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN HERE...
WHAT WOULD INSPEC-TOR HIMURO DO?

OH MY GOD!
WHAT AN ANGLE TO SHOOT!
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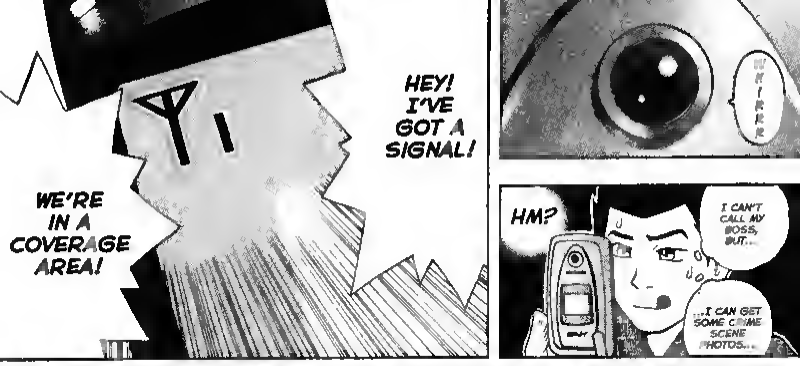
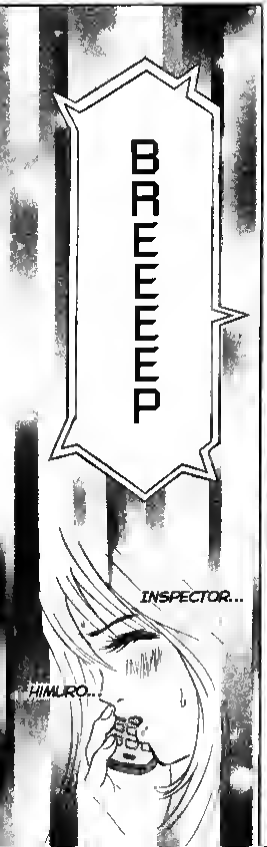
File 72
MURDER AT THE BLOOD POND SPA
SUSPICION
I...ISHI-ZUKA-SENSEI!
ISHIZUKA-SENSEI!
SHE'S DEAD!!
!!
HEY, LOOK!
HER ARTERY WAS CUT.

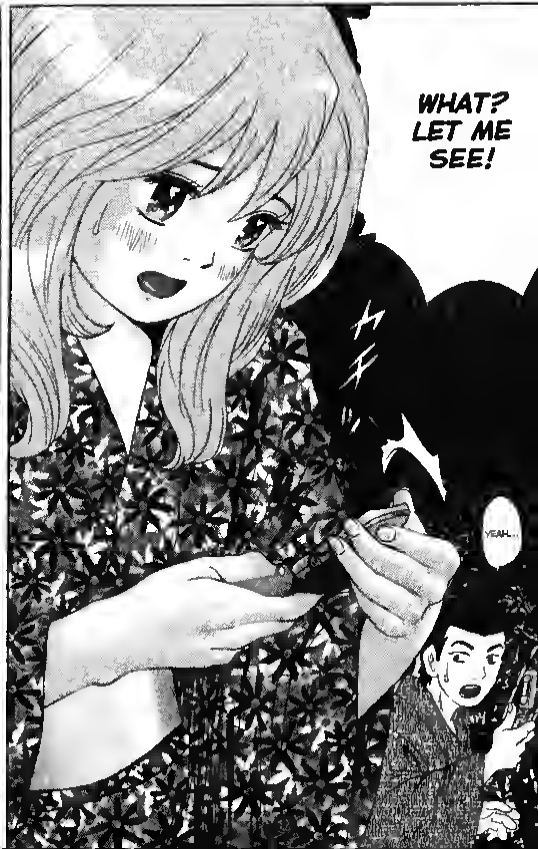
SOMEONE MUST HAVE MOVED THE BODY OUT HERE WITH IT!
THAT'S MY TROLLEY!
OMIGOD! I'LL BE FIRED!
I KNEW SOMETHING HORRIBLE LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN SOMEDAY!
I TOLD HER... I TOLD HER TO BE CAREFUL!
STALKER...?
IT...
IT MUST BE A STALKER!
ISHIZUKA-SENSEI HAD A LOT OF STALKERS!
WHAAAAA!
I'M SORRY, ISHIZUKA-SENSEI...
IF I HADN'T INVITED YOU TO A PLACE LIKE THIS...
HMM...

IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THIS IS THE WORK OF A STALKER...
ESPECIALLY WHEN SO MANY [illegible] WITH A [illegible] TO KILL [illegible] RIGHT HERE.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SOLVE A MURDER CASE BY MYSELF?
THINK LIKE HIMURO, GIRL...
WHAT WOULD HIMURO DO?
C'MON, KURUMI...
YOU CAN DO THIS!


HEY! I'VE GOT A SIGNAL!
WE'RE IN A COVERAGE AREA!
WHIRR

HM?
I CAN'T CALL MY BOSS, BUT...
...I CAN GET SOME CRIME SCENE PHOTOS...


BREEEEP
INSPECTOR...
HIMURO...


WHAT? LET ME SEE!
YEAH...

CLICK
INSPEC-
TOR?
KURUMI?
IT'S RARE FOR YOU TO CALL ME...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?

WHAT'S GOING ON?
I couldn't use my cell-phone... I had no idea what to do...
INSPEC-TOR!? THANK GOD!
HEH!
ALL RIGHT, KURUMI... GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING. WHAT HAPPENED?
...I SEE.
WHILE I THINK YOU'RE CAPABLE ENOUGH TO HANDLE THIS, I'M GLAD YOU CALLED.
OH?

WE'RE DEALING WITH A VERY SMART KILLER HERE.
AND...
...THIS MURDER WAS ALL PLANNED...
...QUITE CLEVERLY.
YOU THINK SO?
Of course!
This is not the act of a run-of-the-mill stalker.
This was planned out in advance.
...
AND THE KILLER is...
...SOMEONE WHO'S STAYING AT THE INN.
OUR KILLER IS SOMEONE WHO KNEW THE VICTIM PERSONALLY.

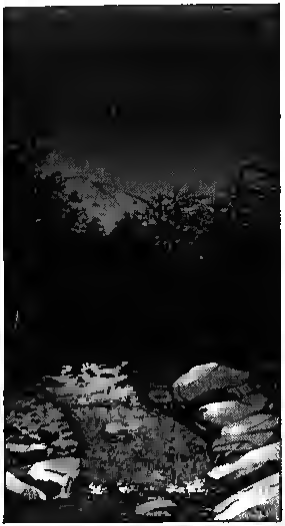
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT ARE YOU ALL STILL DOING OUT HERE?
!!
UGH!
M-MARIA!
EEP!
YA-SU-OKA SEN-SEI!
THE KILLER IS ONE OF THE PEOPLE GATHERED HERE...
HONEY! THIS IS HOR-RIBLE!

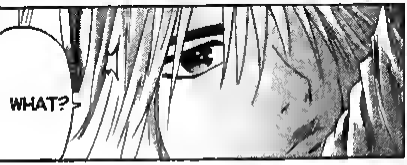
THE FAVORED NOMINEE HAS BEEN MURDERED...
YES, THIS IS A PROB-LEM.
HMM.
THIS IS A PROBLEM, YASUOKA-SENSEI...
PERHAPS NOW HER TRASHY LITTLE NOVEL NEED NOT BE RECOGNIZED.
THE AKUTAGAWA AWARD IS GIVEN NOT ONLY TO THE WORK, BUT ALSO TO THE NOVELIST HIMSELF.
YEAH...
LOOK AT THEM! SOMEONE HAS BEEN MURDERED, AND THEY'RE STILL OBSESSED WITH THEIR STUPID AWARD! DISGUSTING!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, HABU-KUN?!
HMM?
OH! NOTHING!
I WONDER IF ANY OF THEM WANTED THAT AWARD ENOUGH... TO KILL FOR IT?

OMIGOD! IT'S SO TERRIBLE!
WHOA!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MIZUKI-SENSEI?
I HAVE A LOT OF STALKERS TOO! EVEN MORE THAN ISHIZUKA-SENSEI DOES!
OH... IT'S NOT EASY BEING A NOVELIST, IS IT...? HEH HEH... ♡
WHAT IF I'M NEXT?!
SIGH! LISTEN, SHINGO! I JUST TALKED TO THE INSPECTOR
HE SAYS THE KILLER IS ONE OF THEM!
WHAT?
STOP DROOL-ING, SHINGO!
I'M NOT!
CRACK
AND THAT COULD INCLUDE AKARI MIZUKI!
?
R-REALLY?

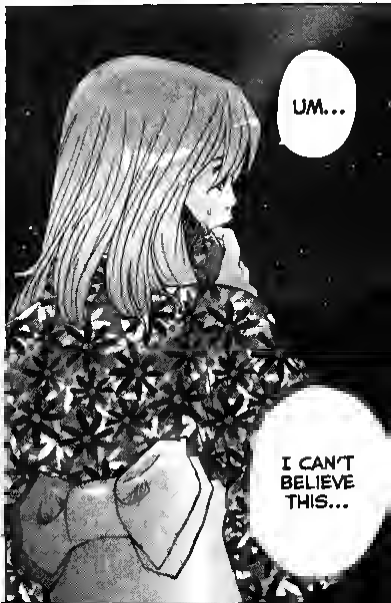
IT HAS TO BE HANDLED HERE...
HOW AM I GOING TO DO THIS?
IF I GO BACK TO THE INN, I CAN'T USE MY CELL PHONE.
FIRST, I NEED YOU TO PROFILE THE SUSPECTS.
BE AS DETAILED AS YOU CAN!
Ayaki, can you hear me?
YES, SIR!
Blood Pond Spa Murder Case
I need more information.

List of suspects
1 Junnosuke Yasuoka (novelist)
2 Akari Mizuki (novelis
3 Kenzou Habu (novelis
4 Fumiko Kawade (editor)
5 Genta Kumada (inn)
6 Toki Kamada
I SEE...




WHAT?-

Indeed.
I KEEP STUMBLING INTO MURDER INVESTIGATIONS WHILE TRYING TO RELAX!


UM...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS...

HIMURO...
RIGHT AFTER...
...SHINGO AND I...
...FOUND MARIA'S BODY...
I GATHERED EVERYONE TOGETHER.
That means the killer carried the body here and went back to the Inn while I was rounding everyone up.
10 min
Inn
Stream
But it takes at least ten minutes to get here by foot.
THEY WOULD HAVE NEEDED TWENTY MINUTES BETWEEN MY DISCOVERING THE BODY, AND MY RETURNING WITH EVERYONE. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
...
ニヤリ・・・

You've made a lot of progress, Ayaki.
WHAT?
You used to just follow my orders without question.
BUT NOW YOU'RE QUESTIONING THE CONTRADICTION OF THE SITUATION, THINKING IT THROUGH.
I'M PROUD OF YOU.
REALLY?
THANK YOU...
...INSPECTOR HIMURO!

Tell me the differences in the suspects' looks and behaviors before the murder and after. Give me as much detail as you can!
YES, SIR! ♡
Now...
I'm glad.
IT'S TRUE.
...IT REALLY MEANS A LOT! ♡
WOW! YOU SAYING THAT...
FIRST... JUN-NOSUKE YASUOKA.
HE'S BEEN FAIRLY COOL ABOUT THE MURDER.
...EVEN THOUGH WE WERE IN A PANIC IN THE HALLWAY...
...HE DIDN'T COME OUT OF HIS ROOM.
HE HAD TO HAVE HEARD US.
WHEN WE FOUND THE BODY...
HE APPEARED LATER AND SAID...
I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST HER TO HAVE ENGINEERED THIS ENTIRE FARCE.
SO, HE DIDN'T COME TO THE STREAM WITH US.

NEXT, AKARI MIZUKI.
AT THE INTERVIEW, SHE WAS WEARING A YUKATA.
...SHE WAS WEARING A BLACK SLEEVE-LESS SHIRT AND A PAIR OF DENIM SHORTS.
BUT WHEN SHE CAME OUT OF HER ROOM...
WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE OUT HERE? DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT--
I THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE SHE'D WEAR DENIM SHORTS TO BED.
NEXT IS KENZOU HABU.
HE'S BEEN WEARING A YUKATA THE WHOLE TIME.
BUT WHEN HE CAME OUT OF HIS ROOM...
...I SAW HIS FEET.
HE WASN'T WEARING HIS SLIPPERS.
HE WAS BARE-FOOT...

...I SAW A COMPUTER IN HER ROOM. MAYBE SHE WAS WORKING.
WHEN I WENT TO TELL HER ABOUT THE BODY...
BUT SHE WASN'T WEARING HER GLASSES.
SHE NEVER WORE A YUKATA, BUT A JACKET, A WHITE T-SHIRT...
FUMIKO KAWADE.
...AND A PAIR OF JEANS.
THEN WE FOUND THE BODY HERE AT THE STREAM...
UH... WHAT?
WHERE'S THE BODY...?
NO...! SHE WAS FLOATING RIGHT THERE!
THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
THEN WE WENT TO SEE THE BODY THAT HAD BEEN FLOATING IN THE WATER...
?!!
BUT THE BODY HAD BEEN MOVED WITHIN THOSE TEN MINUTES.

IF MY REASONING IS COR RECT...
...THE KILLER USED A TRICK TO CREATE AN ALIBI!
A TRICK...?
IT'LL BE A BIT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO FIGURE IT OUT.

MOST PEOPLE WOULD MAKE THE WRONG ASSUMPTION BECAUSE OF TV DRAMAS
HOW THE BODY WAS FOUND... THINK ABOUT WHAT WAS UNNATURAL
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
I'LL GIVE YOU A HINT.
THINK ABOUT THE LAST SCENE OF THE MOVIE TITANIC.

OH MY GOD!
WHAT AN ANGLE TO SHOOT!
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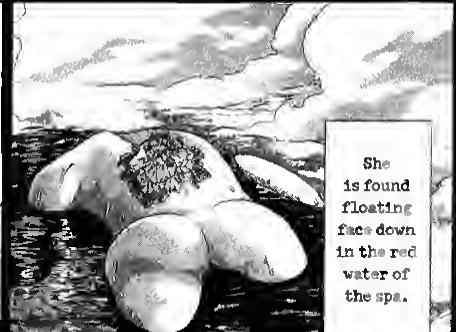
The victim: a novelist, Maria Ishizuka. Distinguishing feature: a large tattoo of a peony on her back.



She is found floating face down in the red water of the spa.

A woman is murdered at the Blood Pond Spa, deep in the mountains.

...and the couple who owns the inn...

There is a group of four staying at the inn...

That is what Inspector Himuro and I believe.

...IS SOMEONE WHO'S STAYING AT THE INN.

THE MURDER SUSPECT...

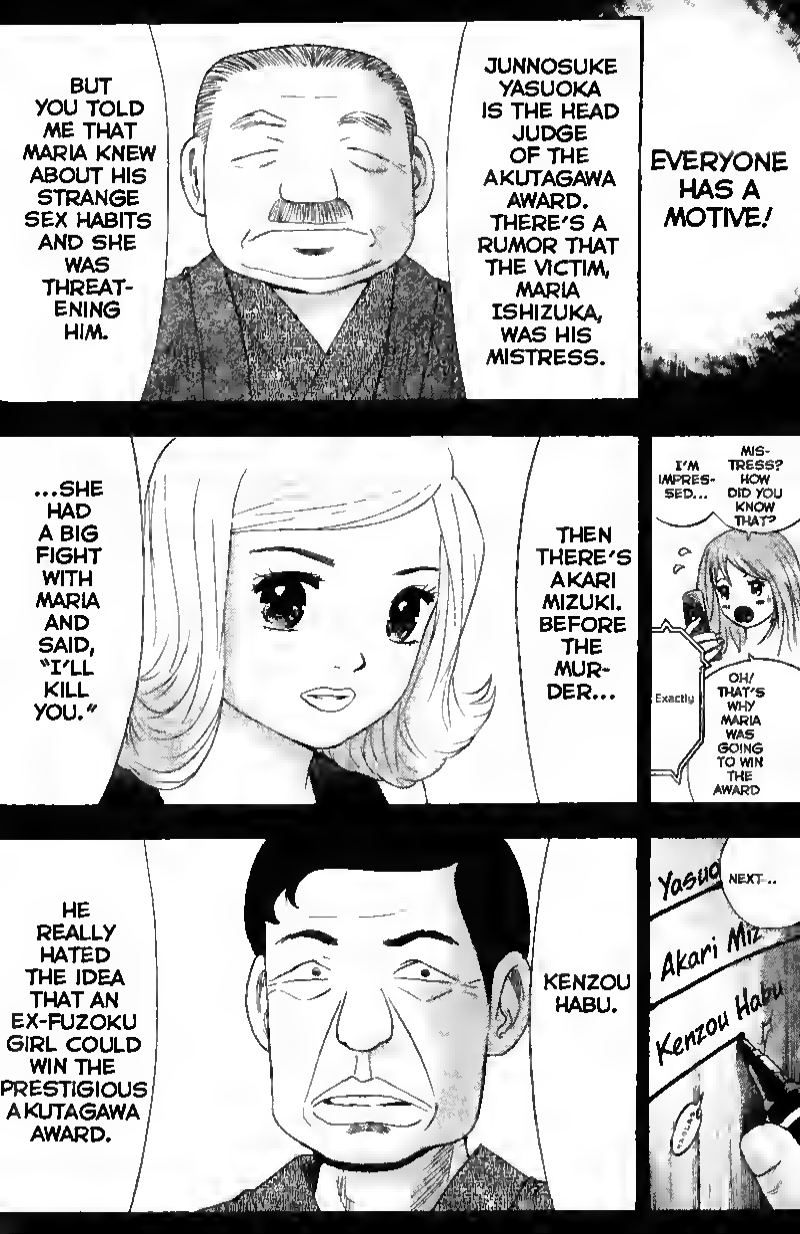
I have contacted Inspector Himuro...

...and explained the situation.

File 73 MURDER AT THE BLOOD POND SPA FLOATING BODY

But so far, everyone has an alibi...
THE LAST SCENE OF THE MOVIE *TITANIC?*
THAT'S THE HINT...?
THE HINT TO FIGURE OUT THE TRICK THE KILLER USED?
IF YOU FIGURE IT OUT, IT NARROWS THE FIELD OF SUSPECTS...
RIGHT!

INSPEC-
TOR...
DO YOU ALREADY KNOW WHO OUR KILLER IS?
?!
TWO...?
...from four to two!
WHAT? THAT'S NOT FAIR! I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT AT ALL!
HOW DO YOU DO THAT?
YOUR EXCELLENT MEMORY TOLD ME WHO IT WAS.
YES, I DO.
YOU WERE THE FIRST WITNESS ON THE SCENE. YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO SOLVE THE PUZZLE.
JUST CALM DOWN AND THINK IT THROUGH


EVERYONE HAS A MOTIVE!
JUNNOSUKE YASUOKA IS THE HEAD JUDGE OF THE AKUTAGAWA AWARD. THERE'S A RUMOR THAT THE VICTIM, MARIA ISHIZUKA, WAS HIS MISTRESS.
BUT YOU TOLD ME THAT MARIA KNEW ABOUT HIS STRANGE SEX HABITS AND SHE WAS THREAT-ENING HIM.
MIS-TRESS? HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?
I'M IMPRES-SED...
OH! THAT'S WHY MARIA WAS GOING TO WIN THE AWARD
Exactly
THEN THERE'S AKARI MIZUKI. BEFORE THE MUR-DER...
...SHE HAD A BIG FIGHT WITH MARIA AND SAID, "I'LL KILL YOU."
NEXT..
Yasuo
Akari Miz
Kenzou Habu
KENZOU HABU.
HE REALLY HATED THE IDEA THAT AN EX-FUZOKU GIRL COULD WIN THE PRESTIGIOUS AKUTAGAWA AWARD.

FINALLY...
...THE EDITOR
FUMIKO KAWADE. SHE WAS SCOLDED BY HER BOSS BECAUSE THE INTERVIEW WAS CANCELLED, WHICH WAS DUE TO MARIA'S BEHAVIOR.
SHE MUST HAVE BEEN HAVING A HARD TIME DEALING WITH MARIA. IT SEEMS WEAK, BUT THAT COULD BE HER MOTIVE.
THIS... THIS IS NOT WORKING...!!
IF EVERYONE HAS A MOTIVE, HOW DO I FIGURE OUT WHO REALLY KILLED HER?
I GAVE YOU A HINT, DIDN'T I?
A HINT THAT NARROWS FOUR SUSPECTS DOWN TO TWO.

THINK ABOUT THE LAST SCENE OF THE MOVIE TITANIC!!
THINK ABOUT HOW THE BODY WAS FOUND. WHAT WAS UNNATURAL ABOUT IT?
...BECAUSE HIMURO SAIO PEOPLE HAVE A MISCONCEP-TION FROM WATCHING TV...
IT'LL BE DIFFICULT TO FIGURE OUT...
GREAT...
I THINK I'M THE ONLY SINGLE WOMAN ALIVE WHO HATED THAT MOVIE...

LET'S SEE...
HMMM...
NOT THAT SCENE.
THE LAST SCENE OF THE MOVIE TITANIC...
THE SCENE WHERE THE GUY SAYS GOOD-BYE TO HIS LOVER...
YOU MEAN THE SCENE WERE THE CRAZY OLD LADY THROWS THE DIAMOND INTO THE OCEAN? THAT MADE ME SO MAD...
I HAVE NO IDEA!
GASP!!

HIS BODY IS FROZEN...
HE DIES...
THEN SLOWLY HE SINKS DEEP INTO THE OCEAN..
SINKING...
SINKING...
DOWN INTO THE OCEAN...

HE SANK!
HIS BODY SANK!!
INSPECTOR HIMURO!!
AT THAT TIME, MARIA WAS...
THAT MEANS...
BUT WAIT!
YOU GOT IT.
YES.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN, INSPECTOR...?
Don't you see?
OH.. NOTHING
WHAT ABOUT MARIA-SENSEI?

The body you discovered at the spa was actually...
!!
I GET IT! NOW I ONLY HAVE TWO SUSPECTS...
And from here it will get more difficult
I'll explain it to you as you go. so now, go back to the inn
WHAT? BUT I CAN'T USE MY PHONE THERE...
The suspect is harmless
Don't worry. you can solve the case by yourself!
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, OFFICER AYAKI...
DIDN'T I TELL YOU?
YOU'RE NOT JUST A POLICE-WOMAN LIKE WHEN WE FIRST MET. YOU'VE BECOME A GREAT DETECTIVE.

It's time for action. Look, don't give the suspect the chance to get rid of the evidence! Ask your fiancée to help you and...
OH... THAT'S RIGHT! ♡
And if you really have to, you can always use the phone at the Inn, right?
INSPECTOR KUROKI...
...question the suspects all at once!
YES, SIR!
HEY! OFFICER!
WHY ARE YOU KEEPING US OUT HERE LIKE THIS?!

OFFICER...
I DON'T MIND, BUT PLEASE, LET THEM GO...
PLEASE BE PATIENT.
I DON'T STAY UP THIS LATE, USUALLY...
YAWN.
YEAH! I WANT TO GO TO MY ROOM!
I'M SCARED!
I MET YOU RIGHT AFTER YOU FOUND THE BODY, RIGHT?
WHAAAT? IMPOSSIBLE!
WAIT... ARE WE SUSPECTS?
SEE? EVERYONE HERE HAS AN ALIBI.
HOW COULD I CARRY THE BODY FROM THE SPA TO THE STREAM? I'M SMALL AND IT TAKES TWENTY MINUTES! PROBABLY MORE PULLING THAT CART!

IT'S A STALKER, RIGHT? IT'S GOTTA BE!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS...
EVERY-ONE STAY WHERE YOU ARE!
SHINGO IS CALLING THE POLICE RIGHT NOW.
OFFICER!
OH— OH MY GOD.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
?
YOUR BOY-FRIEND...
...HE'S DEAD! IN THE SPA!!
WHAT?!

EEEEEEK!
SHI-SHINGO!!
HE...HE... HE...HE'S DEAD?!
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!
CALL ME A TAXI RIGHT NOW!
OH, GOD...

?!!

EVERY-ONE CALM DOWN! NOW!
NO...
IT'S YOUR BOYFRIEND WHO'S FLOATING IN BLOOD!
CALM DOWN...?
AND THAT'S THE STRANGE PART!!
THE WATER ALWAYS LOOKS LIKE THAT...
I KNOW THAT!
ARE YOU BLIND?! HIS BODY IS FLOATING RIGHT THERE...!
WHAT?!

A HUMAN BODY SHOULDN'T FLOAT.
YOU FLOAT IN A SWIMMING POOL BECAUSE YOU BREATHE IN. YOUR LUNGS WORK LIKE A LIFE-PRESERVER.
SO, IF YOU BREATHE OUT...
EEK!
HE'S ALIVE!
SHOW THEM, SHINGO...

SEE? ♡
YOU SINK... LIKE SO.
ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ
AND BECAUSE THE WATER IS RED LIKE BLOOD...
...YOU NATURALLY THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD.
RIGHT. THAT'S WHAT THE KILLER WANTED US TO THINK!!
IF YOU SEE SOMEONE FLOATING IN THE SPA...
...YOU MIGHT TRY TO HELP HER.
YOU MIGHT THINK SHE HAD A HEART ATTACK...
BUT IF THERE WAS REAL BLOOD BY YOUR FEET...
...AND SHE WAS FLOATING IN RED WATER...

HEY, HE'S BEEN IN THE WATER FOR QUITE A WHILE!
RIGHT. NO ONE WOULD GO INTO A POOL FILLED WITH BLOOD.
...YOU'D NATURALLY THINK IT'S A DEAD BODY, RIGHT?
♡
A TRANS-PARENT RUBBER TUBE?!
じゃーん♪
HOW IS HE BREATH-ING?!
SEE? ♡
IT'S A SIMPLE TRICK. LIKE THE NINJA USED.
THAT'S RIGHT. ♡
THE END STICKS OUT BEHIND THAT ROCK. ♡

THEN WHO WAS IT...?
SO WAIT... IT WASN'T MARIA WHO WAS FLOATING?
THE KILLER.
AND THE KILLER... IS ONE OF YOU!
WHAT...?!

File.73 END

OH MY GOD!
WHAT AN ANGLE TO SHOOT!
Manga-Sketchbook not so proudly presents
Remote
Where ugly art and pointless fanservice combine!

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File 74
MURDER AT THE BLOOD POND SPA
THE MOTIVE

BUT IT WAS YOU WHO SAID THE BODY THAT WAS FLOATING WAS MARIA-SENSEI...
THE KILLER IS ONE OF US...?!
BUT IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT...
ANYONE WOULD SEE THAT AND THINK THE BODY WAS HER.
...BECAUSE OF THE TATTOO.
I WAS TRICKED...
...YOU CAN HAVE A WATERPROOF TATTOO PAINTED ON.
MOVIE ACTORS DO IT ALL THE TIME.

SHE WAS MURDERED A WHILE BEFORE-HAND, AND THEN CARRIED TO THE STREAM.
.....
...HURRIED BACK TO THE SPA...
THEN THE KILLER, WHO HAD THE SAME TATTOO PAINTED ON THEIR BACK...
WHILE IN THE WATER...
THEN THE KILLER JUST WAITED FOR SOMEONE TO SHOW UP.
...AND POSED AS THE DEAD BODY.
...BECAUSE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY A BODY TO THE STREAM IN SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME.
...THE KILLER MADE IT LOOK LIKE MARIA'S BODY WAS IN THE SPA TO CREATE THE ALIBI...

...IT WOULD ONLY TAKE A MINUTE OR TWO TO GO TO THE ROOMS FROM THE SPA.
YOU'RE RIGHT...IT TAKES AT LEAST TWENTY MINUTES TO GO TO THE STREAM AND COME BACK, BUT...
IT HAS TO BE A WOMAN TO PRETEND TO BE MARIA!
BUT WAIT! THAT ALSO MEANS THE KILLER IS A WOMAN!
THAT MEANS *NO ONE* HERE HAS AN ALIBI...
NOW WE'VE NARROWED THE FOUR SUSPECTS DOWN TO TWO...
.....
THAT'S RIGHT.

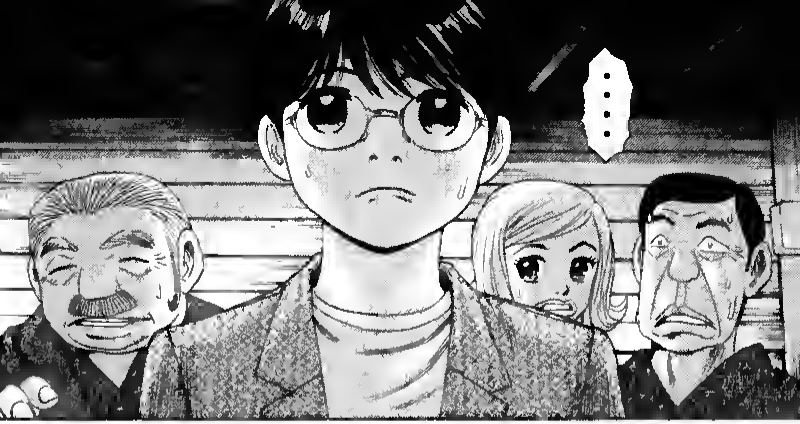
IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT, AKARI?!
ドキッ
N-NO!
WHY WOULD I...?
THEN, IS IT YOU?!
FUMIKO!
W-WAIT A MINUTE!
WE ALL SAY THINGS WHEN WE'RE ANGRY...I DIDN'T...
AT DINNER TONIGHT YOU SAID YOU'D KILL HER!
SHE WAS IN THE SPA, SO...
...SHE WAS PROBABLY WEARING A RUBBER CAP UNDERNEATH A WIG TO PROTECT HER OWN HAIR FROM GETTING WET.
IF YOU THINK ABOUT HER BEHAVIOR AFTER WE FOUND THE BODY IN THE SPA, YOU CAN SEE WHICH ONE IS THE KILLER.
STOP!
I, I COULDN'T...
BUT INSPECTOR HIMURO FIGURED IT OUT AT ONCE.

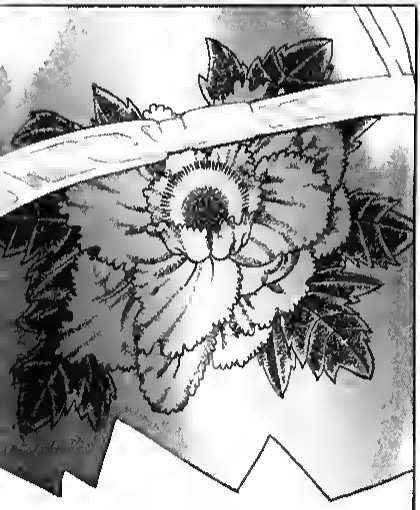
...DRESSED QUICKLY, AND SHOWED UP IN FRONT OF US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
SHE RAN TO HER ROOM AS SHE DRIED HER-SELF...
WHEN SHE SAW SHINGO AND ME RUN AWAY, SHE LEFT THE SPA.
...SHE COULDN'T HIDE.
BUT THERE WAS ONE THING...
SHE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE BODY HEAT FROM SOAKING IN THE HOT SPA FOR A LONG TIME! WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR BODY IS HOT...?
!!
THE BODY HEAT.
WHAT IS THAT...?

PHEW! IT WAS HOT!
THIS!
AH...
THE GLASSES GOT FOGGY!!
もわん
RIGHT! YOU CAN'T WEAR THEM BECAUSE THEY GET FOGGY.
THAT'S WHY YOU WEREN'T WEARING GLASSES...
...WHEN YOU CAME OUT OF YOUR ROOM...

...RIGHT, KAWADE-SAN?
!!
. . .
!!
YOU WERE UNABLE TO WEAR THEM UNTIL YOU ARRIVED AT THE STREAM.
YOU DIDN'T PUT THEM BACK ON UNTIL YOUR BODY COOLED DOWN.
BUT IF YOU WERE WORKING, IT'S STRANGE THAT YOU WEREN'T WEARING GLASSES.
YOU MADE IT LOOK LIKE YOU WERE WORKING.

YOU KILLED HER, DIDN'T YOU?
ADMIT IT.
UH...
...DECEIVED US BY PRETENDING TO BE MARIA...
...CARRIED HER BODY TO THE STREAM...
YOU MURDERED MARIA...
...AND CREATED YOUR ALIBI!
...MADE IT LOOK AS IF YOU WERE WORKING...
...THEN SHOWED UP AND ACTED AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED...





IT MUST STILL BE THERE!

FINE, STAY SILENT. ONE THING YOU CAN'T HIDE IS THE PEONY TATTOO ON YOUR BACK...

WHY THROW IT ALL AWAY WITH A HORRIBLE CRIME LIKE THIS...?
WHY? YOU'RE SO GOOD AT WHAT YOU DO...
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, FUMIKO?!
OH MY GOD...!

I...I COULDN'T FORGIVE HER.

OFFICER...
DO YOU KNOW THE BOOK CALLED A REQUIEM FOR A DISAPPEARING ME?

.....?
TELL ME WHY YOU KILLED MARIA.
EXPLAIN IT TO ME, WILL YOU?

IT'S A STORY ABOUT A GIRL WHO SUFFERS FROM, CJD...
THAT'S MARIA ISHI-ZUKA'S NOVEL, RIGHT?
WHAT...?
YES, I'VE HEARD OF IT.
IT'S A DISEASE CAUSED BY A TAINTED TIS-SUE GRAFT. THE CONTAMINATED TISSUE WAS BANNED OVERSEAS...
...BUT IT WAS STILL USED IN JAPAN DURING OPERATIONS. SO, THE DISEASE SPREAD.
CJD?
SO...
WHAT ABOUT THAT BOOK?
UH... NO.
THE MEDICINE COMPANIES CAUSED THE TROUBLE, JUST LIKE THE WAY THEY CAUSED THE TRANSMISSION OF AIDS IN JAPAN. IT WAS BIG NEWS AT THE TIME.
DIDN'T YOU KNOW?

IT'S BECAUSE OF THAT BOOK MY TWIN SISTER DIED...
NO... SHE WAS MUR-DERED!
AT FIRST... I WAS A FAN OF MARIA'S WORK.
SHE WASN'T POPULAR YET, AND SHE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH EDUCATION, BUT SHE WAS WORKING HARD AS A NOVELIST...
?
I ASKED HER TO WRITE FOR MY PUBLISHER MANY TIMES.
WE BECAME CLOSE FRIENDS.
MY SISTER WAS WORKING FOR A DIFFERENT COMPANY.
WE OFTEN WENT OUT FOR DINNER TOGETHER.

BUT MY SISTER SOON SUFFERED A HUGE MISFORTUNE!
SHE'D HAD A CAR ACCIDENT A FEW YEARS BEFORE, AND SHE'D HAD AN OPERATION ON HER HEAD.
HER DOCTOR CALLED AND SAID THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO TELL ME...
総合病院
N-NO!
YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?
I'M TRULY SORRY.
ONLY RECENTLY LEARNED OF THIS.
THERE'S A HIGH POSSIBILITY THAT...
...THE DURA-MATER GRAFT WE USED FOR THE OPERATION WAS FROM A CJD PATIENT!!

WH-WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO MY SISTER?
IF SHE HAS JAKOB DIS-EASE...
I'M SO SORRY!
ALL I CAN DO IS APOLOGIZE...
THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE IGNORANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE
AS A PERSON WHO WORKS IN THE MEDIA, I KNEW THE HORRORS OF CREUTZFELD JAKOB DISEASE.
...THERE ARE DOCUMENTED CASES WHERE IT TAKES MORE THAN TEN YEARS TO DEVELOP, SO...
AND EVEN IF SHE HAS...
EASY NOW... EXPOSURE DOESN'T MEAN SHE DEFINITELY HAS IT
IT IS POSSIBLE SHE MIGHT NOT HAVE CONTRACTED
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO MY SISTER?!
TELL ME!

WELL... IN THE FIRST STAGES SHE'LL EXPERIENCE EXTREME DIZZINESS...
...AND HAVE DIFFICULTY WALKING.
SOON AFTER THAT HAPPENS HER BRAIN FUNCTIONS WILL RAPIDLY DETERIO-RATE.
AND THEN...
...SHE'LL LOSE ALL HER HIGHER BRAIN FUNCTIONS.
AND EVENTUALLY...

!!
WHA- WHAT'S THE CURE?
CAN'T YOU HELP HER? CAN YOU STOP IT FROM DEVELOPING?
AT THE MOMENT, THERE IS NO KNOWN CURE.
BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL TREATMENTS IN DEVELOP-MENT...
...AND LET'S NOT FORGET... THERE'S NO PROOF YET THAT YOUR SISTER IS EVEN INFECTED.

WHAT DID SHE DO TO DESERVE THIS?
OH, AKIKO... NO...
I'M SORRY...
BUT WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH...
..KILLING MARIA?
AKI-KO...

MY SISTER COM-MITTED SUICIDE... BECAUSE OF HER!
THAT WOMAN IS THE ONE WHO TOLD MY SISTER ABOUT THE DISEASE!
WAIT...! SO, THE HEROINE IN MARIA'S BOOK IS REALLY...
!!
THAT'S RIGHT! IT WAS MY SISTER!!

file.74 END

File 75
MURDER AT THE BLOOD POND SPA
PROMISE

IF SHE FINDS OUT THAT SHE MIGHT HAVE SUCH A DISEASE...
...SHE'LL BE TERRIFIED!
WHAT SHOULD I DO, MARIA-SENSEI?
MY SISTER IS SO DELICATE!
THANK YOU FOR TRUSTING ME.
DON'T TELL YOUR SISTER...
...OR ANYONE ELSE ABOUT THIS, OKAY?
OKAY.
AND...
...IS IT ALL RIGHT IF I MEET THE DOCTOR IN PERSON AND HEAR ABOUT THE DISEASE?
I'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT... YOUR SISTER'S SITUATION.

I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THAT SHE WAS PLANNING TO USE MY SISTER'S SITUATION FOR HER BOOK!

I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED IT AT THAT MOMENT.

MARIA WAS AN EXCEEDINGLY SELFISH PERSON...

. . . .

IF YOU HAD KNOWN MY SISTER, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS...

ALMOST EVERYTHING IN THAT BOOK IS TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM AKIKO'S LIFE.

HOW SHE'D DEVELOP THE SYMPTOMS AND DIE...

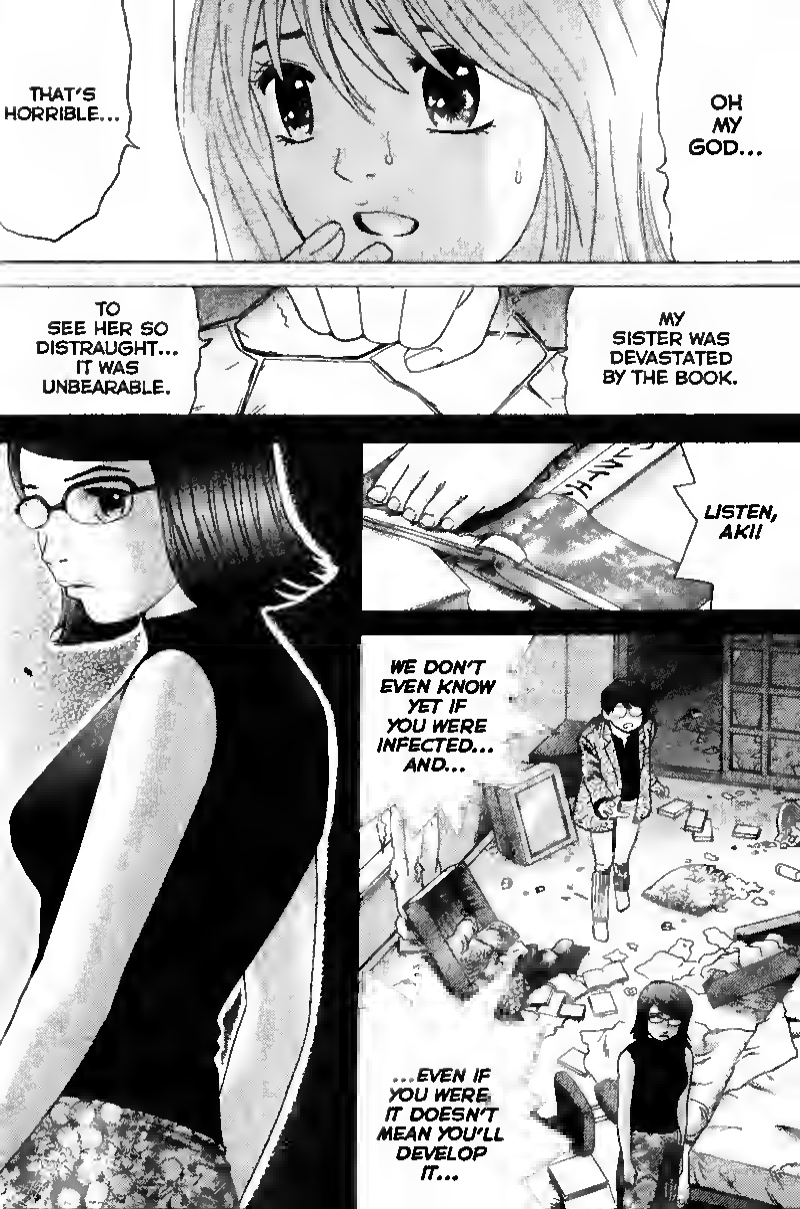
IT WAS ALL VERY DETAILED... HORRIBLY SO.

WHAT'S MORE...

...THE BOOK LAID OUT HER FUTURE...

AND WHEN MY SISTER HERSELF READ IT...

OH, NO...


THAT'S HORRIBLE...
OH MY GOD...
TO SEE HER SO DISTRAUGHT... IT WAS UNBEARABLE.
MY SISTER WAS DEVASTATED BY THE BOOK.
LISTEN, AKI!
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW YET IF YOU WERE INFECTED... AND...
...EVEN IF YOU WERE, IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL DEVELOP IT...

FUMI...
YOU KNOW HOW I AM, DON'T YOU?
I CAN'T...
I CAN'T BEAR THE HORROR...
...AND LIVE...I CAN'T.
SOON AFTER THAT, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE.
SHE TOOK A HUGE BOTTLE OF SLEEPING PILLS AND...
...SLASHED HER THROAT...

WHAT DID MARIA SAY WHEN YOUR SISTER COMMITTED SUICIDE?!
MY GOD... THAT'S HORRIBLE. I AM SO SORRY...
...WHILE I WAS STILL IN SHOCK...
SHE CALLED ME...
...
I'm surprised
What happened?
I can't believe Aki committed suicide...
!!
HEART-BREAK?
OR WAS IT THE STRESS OF HER WORK...?

IT WASN'T SADNESS THAT SHOOK MY BODY. IT WAS ANGER...
SHE ACTED AS IF SHE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT...
...AND HAD THE NERVE TO ASK WHY MY SISTER KILLED HERSELF.
ALL UNDER THE PRETENSE SHE WAS SYMPATHIZING WITH ME...

I WANTED TO SCREAM... I WANTED TO TELL HER...
"MY SISTER IS DEAD BECAUSE OF YOUR FUCKING BOOK!"
"SHE MIGHT NOT HAVE EVEN HAD THE DISEASE!"
"BUT BECAUSE OF YOU, SHE KILLED HER-SELF!"
I REALLY WANTED TO SAY IT!

"HER BOYFRIEND DUMPED HER, AND THAT'S WHY SHE KILLED HERSELF."
BUT I HELD IN MY FURY AND SAID...
AND I CONTINUED TO BE MARIA'S FRIEND...
...PLANNING TO AVENGE MY SISTER SOMEDAY...

THAT BITCH... SHE BECAME FAMOUS BECAUSE OF THAT BOOK...
...THE BOOK THAT TOOK MY SISTER'S LIFE. I COULDN'T STAND IT!
SO...WHILE SHE WAS HAVING THE BEST TIME OF HER LIFE... WHEN SHE WAS NOMINATED FOR THE AKUTAGAWA AWARD...
...I KNEW IT WAS TIME. TIME FOR HER TO DIE!

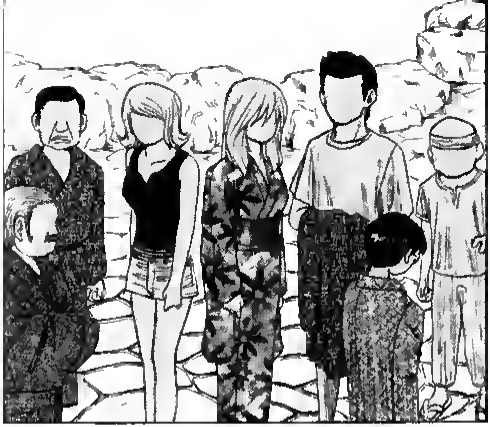
GIRGH
HARGH!
GACK!
BROUGHT LOW AT THE PINNACLE OF HER LIFE... JUST LIKE AKIKO.
W-WHY...?
GAAGH
POOSH...
HOW DOES IT FEEL, MARIA, TO BE ON TOP OF THE WORLD...AND THEN HAVE IT SNATCHED AWAY?
SHE SLASHED HER OWN THROAT JUST LIKE THAT...
FOR MY SISTER.

...IT'S DONE.
FINALLY...
ザバ

MY TWIN SISTER, AKI... SHE WAS MY ENTIRE LIFE.
WHEN SHE DIED...
...I THINK I DIED AS WELL.
THE ONLY THING I HAD LEFT...
...WAS REVENGE. AND NOW THAT'S GONE TOO.

THAT'S NOT TRUE!
.....?
I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR SISTER... I REALLY AM...
...BUT YOUR LIFE IS NOT HERS.
YOU'RE NOT YOUR SISTER.
I'M SORRY SHE WAS TAKEN FROM YOU...BUT IS THIS WHAT SHE WOULD HAVE WANTED FOR YOU?

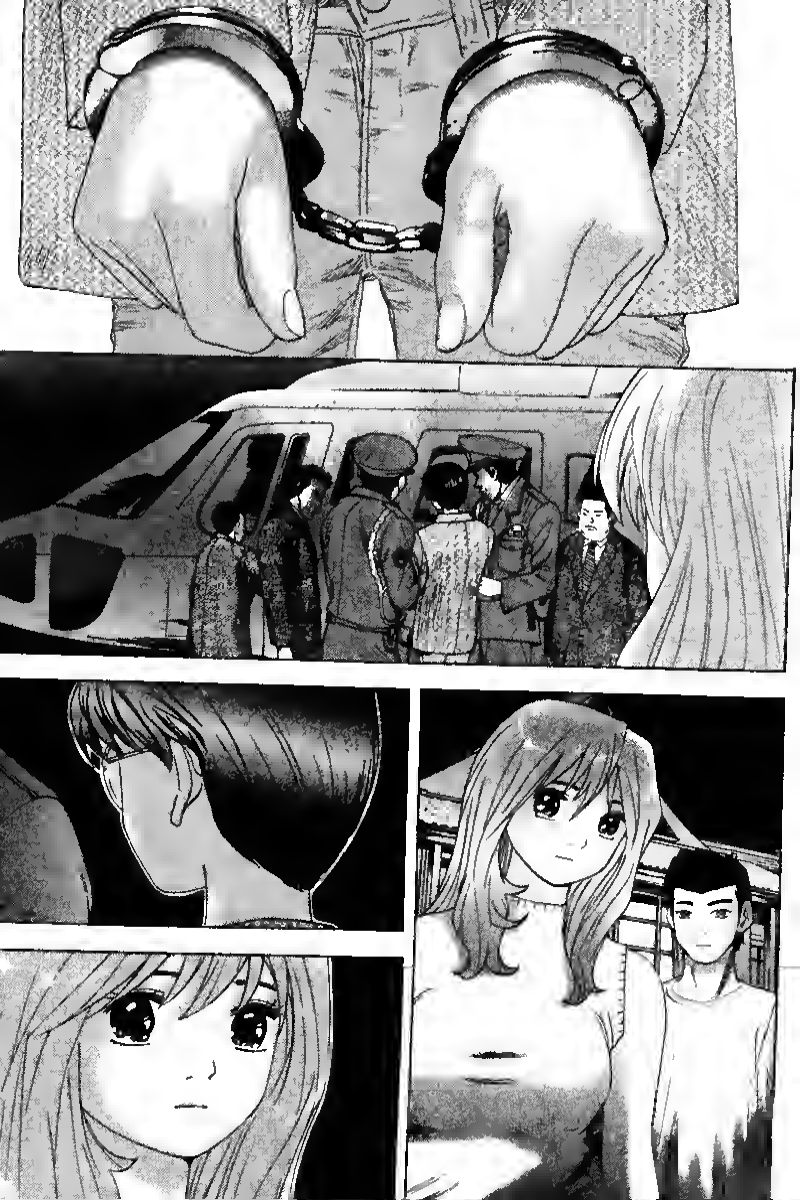
YOU'LL NEVER UNDER-STAND HOW I FEEL...
MAYBE NOT...
...BUT WOULD AKIKO?
...WHAT?
DON'T FOLLOW YOUR SISTER'S PATH. IF YOU TRULY WANT TO HONOR HER MEMORY...
...YOU'D TAKE THE TIME YOU HAVE LEFT AND TRY TO DO SOMETHING GOOD WITH IT.



...
CALL THE POLICE.
I DON'T WANNA BE HERE FOR ONE MORE SECOND.

GOOD JOB, OFFICER AYAKI!
THEY'VE CLEARED THE ROADS, SO A CAR SHOULD BE HERE WITHIN THE HOUR
...
THANK YOU...

Metropolitan Police Department



KURU-MI...
HUH?
THERE'S A CALL FOR YOU.
WHAT?
HEL-LO...?
OH-, INSPEC-TOR HIMURO
GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU...

...KURUMI.
IT'S GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU...
Are you okay?
OH, I'M JUST...
!
They told me everything
Your phone still isn't working, so i called the inn.
...

A few days later...

...I received a letter from the local jail.

It was short...but hopeful.

You were right. I won't follow Akiko's path. I think that's what she would have wanted. Thank you, -Fumiko Kawode

END

OH MY GOD!
WHAT AN ANGLE TO SHOOT!
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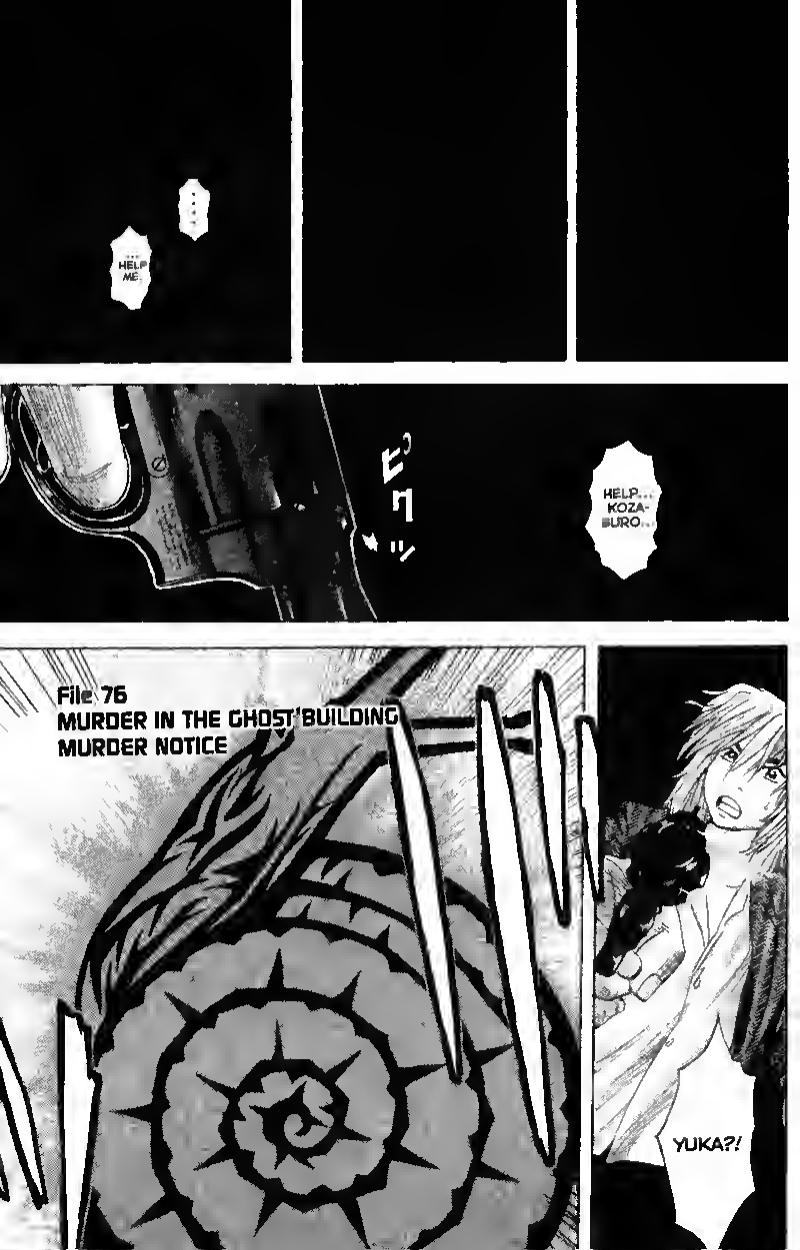
CHAPTER 9
Murder in the Ghost Building


HELP ME
HELP... KOZABURO...
ピクッ
File 76
MURDER IN THE GHOST BUILDING
MURDER NOTICE
YUKA?!

SNAIL!!
BREEP
BREEP
CLICK
THAT DREAM... AGAIN...?

YES, HANAE?
...
UH...
...
NAOMI IS HERE AGAIN.
LET ME TALK TO HER...
...

NAO-MI...
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME... I CAN'T LEAVE MY ROOM.
...KOZA-BURO?
WHY CAN'T I SEE YOU?
I CAN'T SEE YOU...
I JUST CAN'T...
CAN'T? OR WON'T?!
I DON'T UNDER-STAND! WHAT HAVE I DONE WRONG?
CLICK
KOZ--
...KOZA-BURO...

...
MAYBE IT'S BEST YOU DON'T COME HERE ANYMORE...
NAO-MI...
I'LL BE BACK. COUNT ON IT.
SOB ...
OH, BOY...

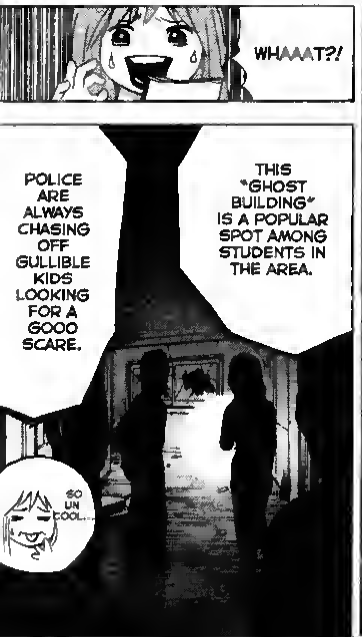
HOW'S KO EVER GONNA LET GO OF THE PAST...
...IF HE KEEPS RUNNIN' FROM IT?
OH..
HELLO...? UH...
THE GATE WAS OPEN...
?
WHAT'S THE MATTER, YOU TWO...?
?
YOU'RE RIGHT...
HEY! ♡
HERE COMES KO'S FUTURE!
WHAT?

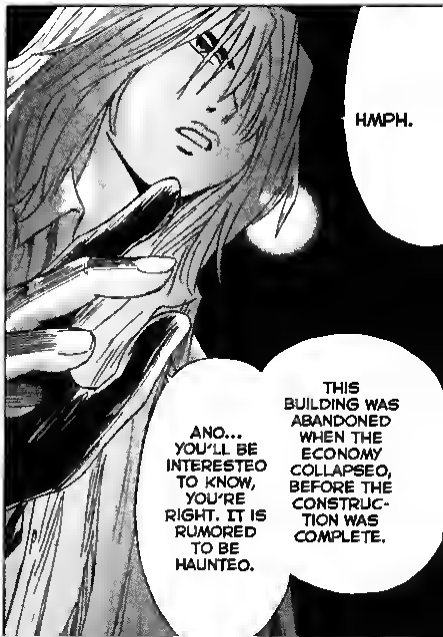
GOOOD MOOORNING, SUNSHINE! TEE HEE!
♡
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ANYHOW?
DON'T YOU EVER KNOCK?!

GEEZ! SORRY!
UM...
LOOK, I... FORGET IT. OBVIOUSLY YOU'VE GOTTEN OVER THAT LAST CASE. YOU LOOK... WELL.
WHAT IS IT?
OH...
THANKS TO YOU, INSPECTOR.
YOU SAID I DID A GOOD JOB.
THAT MEANT A LOT.
I MEAN THAT... THANK YOU.
HA...
I ENVY YOU...
WHAT?

TO FIND ENCOURAGEMENT IN SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS THE WORDS OF ANOTHER.
I WISH I COULD...
YOU CAN, INSPECTOR...
...IF YOU'D LEAVE THIS DREARY ROOM ONCE IN AWHILE.
WHY DON'T YOU GO OUT FOR ONCE?
COME ON
MAYBE A TRIP TO DISNEYLAND! IT IS THE HAPPIEST PLACE... ON...
じーっ
.. ON.. UH.. HEH
HM...?
WELL, IF YOU'VE GOT TIME TO THINK ABOUT NONSENSE LIKE THAT, THEN YOU HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
WORK?
OH!

THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE A HAUNTED MANSION. YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO DISNEYLAND?


WHAAAT?!
POLICE ARE ALWAYS CHASING OFF GULLIBLE KIDS LOOKING FOR A GOOO SCARE.
THIS "GHOST BUILDING" IS A POPULAR SPOT AMONG STUDENTS IN THE AREA.
SO UN COOL...


HMPH.
THIS BUILDING WAS ABANDONED WHEN THE ECONOMY COLLAPSED, BEFORE THE CONSTRUC-TION WAS COMPLETE.
ANO... YOU'LL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT IS RUMORED TO BE HAUNTED.

WHAAAAT?! WHY DO I HAVE TO INVESTIGATE A HAUNTED BUILDING?
AND YOU'RE GOING TO GO POKE AROUND IN THERE FOR ME.
FOR-GET IT!
I HATE THIS KIND OF STUFF...!
I HAVE A FEELING SOMETHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN THERE.
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GHOSTS.
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY!
YOU'RE NOT THE ONE GOING IN THERE!
WHAT?

Track 1
OOOH... HAAAH... KAAH... HEEE...
LISTEN TO THIS...
CLICK
THIS IS A CALL THAT CRIMINAL INVESTI-GATIONS RECEIVED SEVERAL TIMES.
AT FIRST, THEY THOUGHT THIS WAS SOME KIND OF JOKE AND DIDN'T TRACE THE CALL, BUT...
...NOW LISTEN TO THIS!
WOO-HEEE... OA-HOOO...
OOOOH... EEE... HAAH... WOOO...
WHA... WHAT'S THAT WEIRD NOISE...?
SOME-ONE'S VOICE...?
BUT I CAN'T MAKE OUT WHAT IT'S SAYING...

NOVEMBER 10TH... 12:00AM... GHOST BUILDING... SOMEONE WILL DIE...IT IS A CURSE...
NOVEM...BER...TEN... TH...TWEL...VE...A... M...GHOST...BUILD... ING...SOME...ONE... WILL...DIE...IT...IS... A...CURSE...
THAT'S WHAT YOU HEAR WHEN THE TAPE IS PLAYED BACKWARD.
OH!
WHAAAAT?!
I...I CAN'T. I'M REALLY, REALLY SCARED OF GHOSTS! I MEAN IT!
BUT EITHER WAY, I NEED YOU THERE ON NOVEMBER 10TH!
MAYBE IT'S JUST A SICK JOKE...
OR MAYBE IT'S THE WORK OF SOME NUT LOOKING FOR AN AUDIENCE.

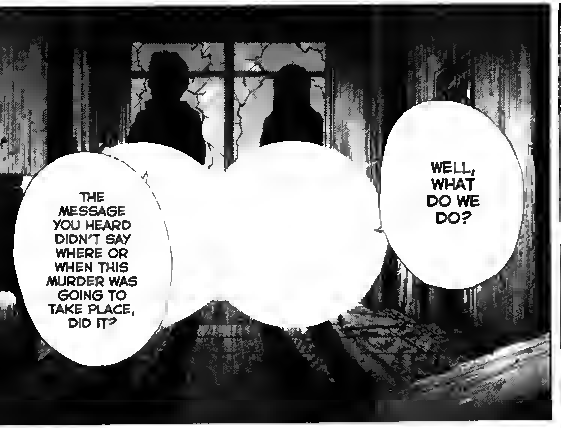
MAYBE IT'S A CRANK... BUT IF SOMEONE'S REALLY PLANNING A MURDER...
HOW CAN SUCH A SMART GIRL BE SO STUPID SOME-TIMES?
I DON'T KNOW...
OFFICER... THINK ABOUT THIS. IF THE PERSON WHO SENT THIS IS LEGITIMATE, WHY WARN THE POLICE ABOUT WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO?
EITHER IT'S A TRICK TO LEAD THE POLICE AWAY FROM WHERE HE'S PLANNING THE REAL CRIME...
THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE EXPLANA-TIONS.
...AND THEY'RE CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO TELL US ABOUT IT IN ADV NCE?
NOW I REALLY DON'T WANT TO GO.

...OR, HE'S SO CONFIDENT THAT EVEN WITH HIM HANDING THE POLICE THE LEAD...
...THEY'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO STOP HIM.
I... SEE.
EITHER WAY, IT SUGGESTS SOMEONE DANGEROUS... MAYBE SOMEONE WHO'S KILLED BEFORE AND GOTTEN AWAY WITH IT.

ばあさん

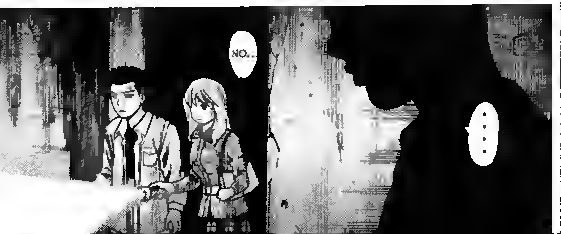
[illegible] I [illegible] at the so-called "Ghost Building"...
November 10th, 11:50 P.M...,

THANKS... THANKS FOR COMING, SHINGO...
IT'S COOL... MAKES A GOOD STORY, ANYWAY...
AND I DON'T LIKE THAT JERK HIMURO SENDING YOU HERE ALONE...


WELL, WHAT DO WE DO?
THE MESSAGE YOU HEARD DIDN'T SAY WHERE OR WHEN THIS MURDER WAS GOING TO TAKE PLACE, DID IT?

WHAT?
HE'S NOT A JERK! I MEAN... IT'S MY JOB...

NOT A GOOD SIGN, SHINGO... NOT GOOD.
MM... SHE'S DEFENDING HIM.


NO..
...

IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT, SHINGO...
WHAT? OH, YEAH...

I'M KURUMI AYAKI, FROM CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS.
I'M INVESTIGATING A TIP WE RECEIVED.
WHAT?!
THE POLICE...?
INVESTIGATE...?
THAT'S MY QUESTION! WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING HERE...?
!!
WHO'S THERE?!
...

THE PLOT THICKENS. STAY ALERT.
ARE THERE?
Yes, sir.
INSPECTOR, THERE ARE FIVE PEOPLE IN THE BUILDING...
THIS GIRL IS A COP?
I WAS EXPECTING SOMEONE... OLDER. MORE EXPERIENCED.
I GUESS IT DOESN'T MATTER...
AS LONG AS THERE'S SOMEONE HERE TO BE MY WITNESS...
file.76 END

OH MY GOD!
WHAT AN ANGLE TO SHOOT!
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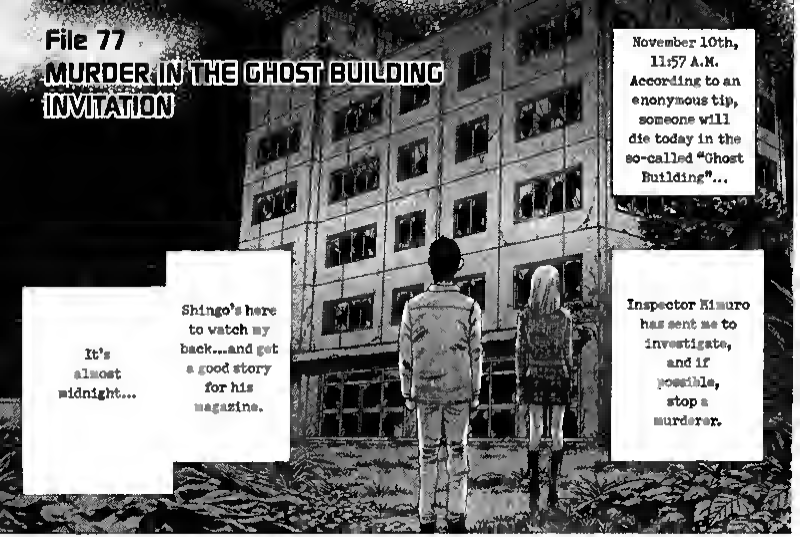
File 77
MURDER IN THE GHOST BUILDING
INVITATION


November 10th, 11:57 A.M. According to an anonymous tip, someone will die today in the so-called "Ghost Building"...
Inspector Kimuro has sent me to investigate, and if possible, stop a murderer.
Shingo's here to watch my back...and get a good story for his magazine.
It's almost midnight...

OH REALLY. DO YOU ALWAYS SURVEY REAL ESTATE AT MIDNIGHT?
HEY THERE, HOT STUFF... I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, OKAY?
I'M JUST CHECKING THIS PLACE OUT FOR A POSSIBLE REAL ESTATE DEAL.
THE BUILDING'S WORTH-LESS, BUT THE LAND...
DOES HE EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THIS? IT'S OBVIOUS HE'S LYING.
...
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
I'M TARO.
TARO KOUGAMI.
I'M TOO BUSY DURING THE DAY.
AS A MAT-TER OF FACT, YEAH.
BESIDES, THIS PLACE IS RUMORED TO BE HAUNTED... THAT'LL MAKE IT A TOUGH INVESTMENT SO I NEED TO MAKE SURE, YOU KNOW?

Taro Kougami, a real estate agent, right?
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON....
I'M JUST A BARTENDER.
MY NAME IS JUNYA SHISHIKURA. HERE'S MY BUSINESS CARD.
Phantom Wine Bar
Junya Shishikura
ONE OF MY CUSTOMERS LOVES GHOST STORIES...BIG TIPPER. SO, I CAME HERE TO IMPRESS HIM.
Real Estate
Taro Kougami
Bartender
Junya Shishikura
Junya Shishikura, a bartender.
THAT SOUNDS FISHY, TOO.

...BUT I REALLY DIG THE SUPER-NATURAL.
I READ ABOUT THIS PLACE ON AN OCCULT SITE ON THE INTERNET. I JUST HAD TO CHECK IT OUT!
HUH?
NOT THAT IT'S REALLY ANY OF YOUR BUSI-NESS...
AND YOU?
NOT EXACTLY A PLACE FOR A YOUNG GIRL TO BE HANGING OUT LATE AT NIGHT, DON'T YOU THINK?
...AND YOU TWO, MAY I ASK YOUR NAME, OCCUPATION, AND--
!
I'M A BEAUTICIAN. MY NAME IS KAORU MAIKAWA.
CAN I GO NOW?
I SEE.
THAT SOUNDS FISHY, TOO...
WHAT DO YOU DO?

MY NAME IS BUNJAKU OU. I'M A PLASTIC SURGEON. THE REASON I'M HERE IS... HEE HEE...
AND THE REASON WHY I'M HERE, RIGHT?
I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.
...TO FIND OUT THE IDENTITY OF THE GHOST!
!
THE GHOST ASKED ME TO COME... WITH THIS LETTER.
RIGHT.
IDENTITY OF...
.. THE GHOST?

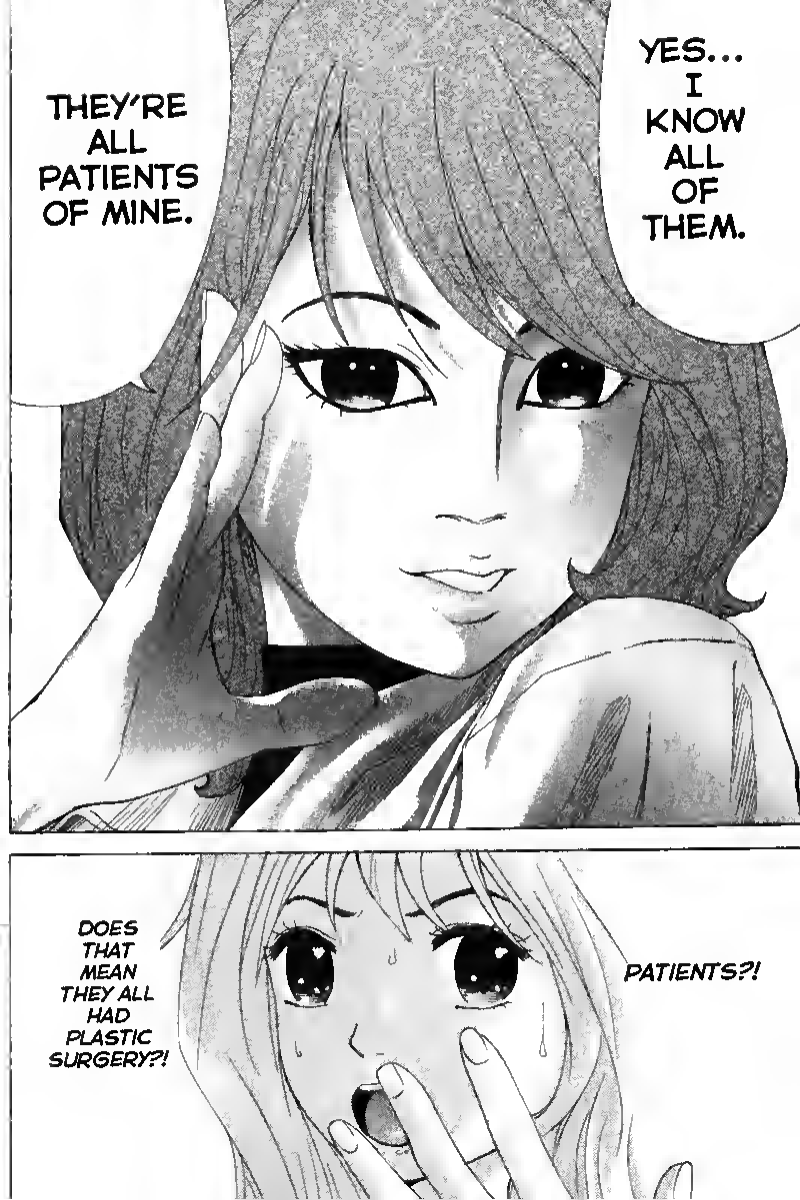
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE?
RIGHT.
SO...
THAT MEANS YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO HIDE, THEN.
!
DOESN'T EVERYONE, OFFICER...?
BLACK
INVITATION
THAT'S RIGHT- ACCORDING TO THE LETTER, I HAD TO BE HERE TONIGHT AT MIDNIGHT OR ELSE SOMEONE WOULD...WELL... SAY SOME PRETTY NASTY STUFF ABOUT ME ON THE INTERNET-
BLACK INVITATION...?
WHA- WHAT'S THIS?!

I...
ドキッ
...SUP-
POSE.
I DO...
SO, I
CAME.
DON'T
FEEL
BAD.
WE
ALL HAVE A
SECRET OR
TWO, DON'T
WE?
ALTHOUGH
THE LETTER
DOESN'T SAY
EXACTLY WHAT
THE SENDER
KNOWS...
CREEPY,
HUH?
DON'T YOU
AGREE,
MR.
GOUDA?
IT'S
THE SAME
WITH YOU,
RIGHT?
WHAT?
N-NO,
I'M...
!

DO YOU KNOW HIM, MS. OU?
WHAT...?
YES, I DO.
HIS NAME IS YUKICHI GOUDA.
HE'S A DIRTY MONEY BROKER.
DIRTY...? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, DR. OU?
YOU RECEIVED THE SAME LETTER, DIDN'T YOU? OF COURSE YOU CAME
YOU HAVE SKELETONS IN YOUR CLOSET, EH? ♡
S-STOP THAT! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

I WAS JUST INTERESTED IN THE PROPERTY AS A FINANCER...
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE!
OF COURSE NOT!
IS THAT TRUE? YOU RECEIVED A LETTER, TOO?
MR. GOU-DA...
HE'S LYING FOR SURE...
I SEE...
YEAH... I THINK SO, TOO.
I THINK EVERYONE'S HERE FOR THE SAME REASON AS DR. OU...

AYAKI!
ASK OU, THE PLASTIC SURGEON, IF SHE KNOWS ANYONE ELSE IN THE GROUP!
OKAY.
!
DR. OU... DO YOU KNOW ANYONE HERE OTHER THAN MR. GOUDA?
...
!
!


THEY'RE ALL PATIENTS OF MINE.
YES... I KNOW ALL OF THEM.
DOES THAT MEAN THEY ALL HAD PLASTIC SURGERY?!
PATIENTS?!

YEAH!
WHAT HAPPENED TO DOCTOR/PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY?
DAMMIT, DR. OU!!
HEE HEE... DON'T WORRY.
ISN'T IT OUR DUTY AS CITIZENS TO COOPERATE WITH POLICE INVESTIGATIONS?
WELL... BUT...
Oh, but she's a police officer
IT'S NOT LIKE I REVEALED ANY OF YOUR REAL SECRETS, NOW IS IT?

ASK THEM IF THEY KNOW EACH OTHER.
AYAKI!
THESE PEOPLE... WHAT IS THEIR REAL CONNECTION? WHAT ARE THEY HERE FOR?
Click Click
Okay...

SEE WHAT...?
WHAT?
...I SEE.
OTHER THAN DR. OU, DOES ANYONE HERE KNOW EACH OTHER?
I DON'T THINK SO.
NO.
I'VE NEVER MET THEM BEFORE.
Jury Shishikura Bartender
Kaori Gouda Manajender
Bunjaku Ou
Tar Kougami Real Estate
Kaori Maikawa Beautician
THOSE FIVE PEOPLE ARE GATHERED THERE ON PURPOSE, AND THEIR CONNECTION IS THE PLASTIC SURGEON, DR. OU!
The person who sent them the threatening letter. The same person who called the police...the would-be killer
BLACK INVITATION
THE KILLER?!
GATHERED...? BY WHO...?

!!
HEY...!!
IT'S ALMOST TIME!
11:52
SHIT!
WHA...
!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
I HAVE TO GO!
LET'S GO!
PLEASE, WAIT! DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND? I'M HERE BE-CAUSE...
GO? TO WHERE?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

...I HAVE INFORMATION THAT SOMEONE IS PLANNING A MURDER HERE TONIGHT!
AND ONE OF YOU MAY VERY WELL BE THE INTENDED VICTIM!
...OFFICER.
EVERYONE HERE...
...GOT THE LETTER, I THINK.
THE BLACK INVITATION!!
BLACK INVITATION

OFFICER, YOU HAVE A GUN, DON'T YOU?
YES...
GOOD. IF ONE OF THEM TRIES TO DO SOMETHING FUNNY...
...YOU CAN PROTECT US.
YOU CAN STOP THE CRIME BEFORE IT HAPPENS...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?
...I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE MUCH LUCK CONVINCING THEM TO LEAVE, YOU KNOW?

THE LETTER SAYS, "YOU MUST COME TO THE EAST END OF THE ROOM ON THE SEVENTH FLOOR AT 12:00 A.M."
THAT'S WHY EVERYONE IS IN SUCH A HURRY.
THEY'RE ALL SCARED THAT THEIR SECRET WILL BE OUT, SO...

...they're running upstairs into uncertainty, as if possessed.
These five people are gathered here by a weird letter, and...
However, I think at least one person wasn't worried...
Whatever secret they had to hide was more terrible than the danger that awaited...
...and was running with us...
...while harboring a cunning intent to kill.
Or so it would seem.
file.77 END

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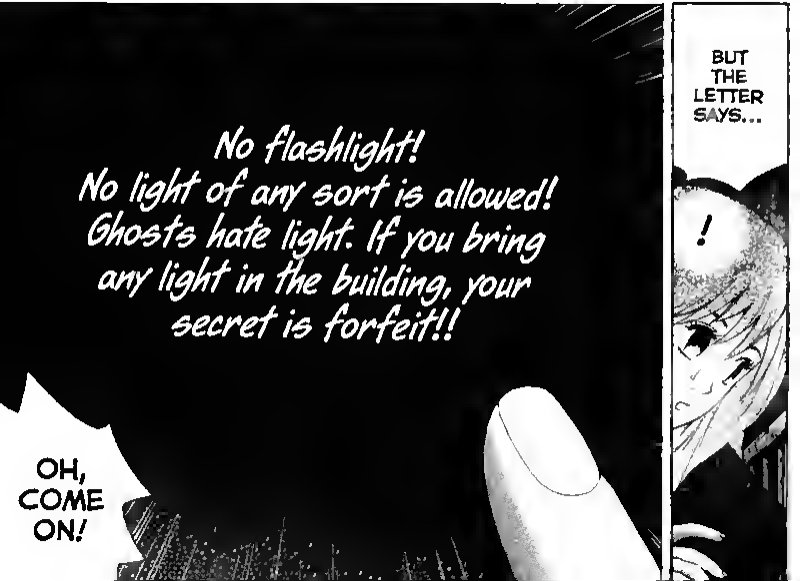
YOU CAN'T USE THAT FLASH-LIGHT.
WHAT? WHY?
BUT IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE ANY-THING WITH-OUT IT...
File 78
MURDER IN THE GHOST BUILDING
DARKNESS
OH, HEY, OFFICER!
YES?

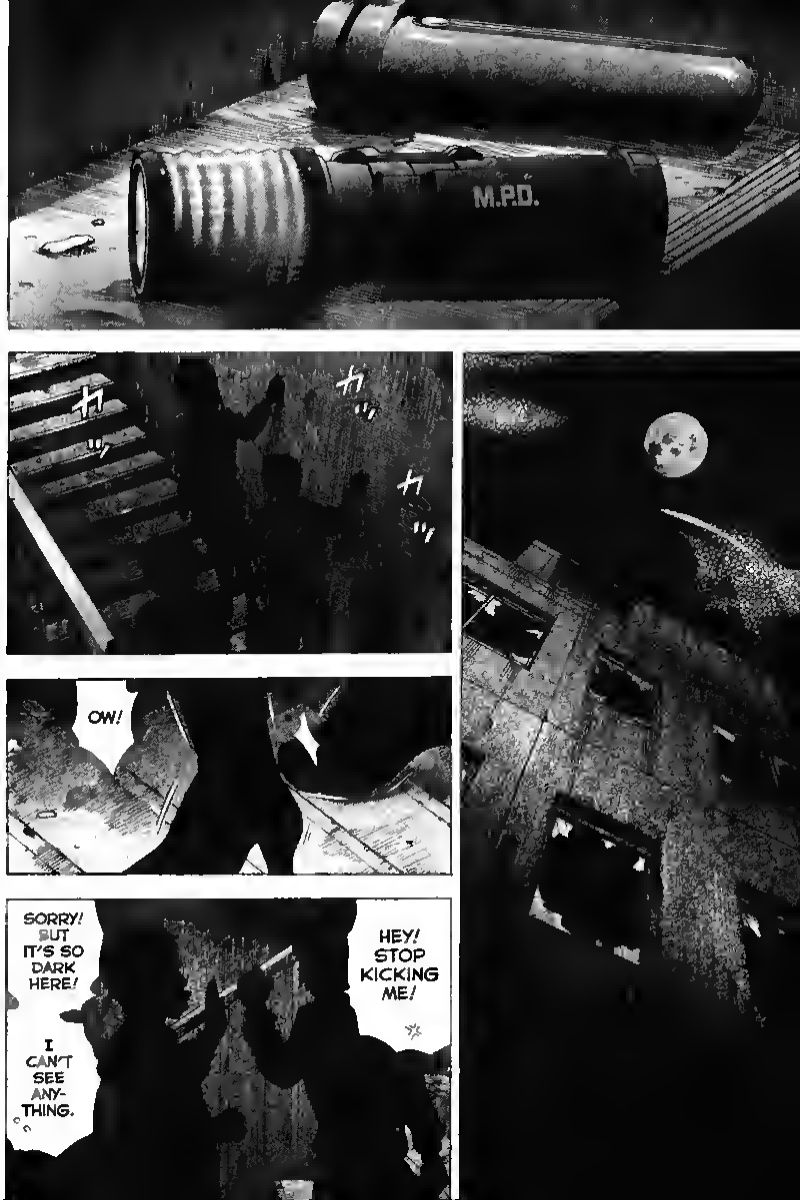

No flashlight!
No light of any sort is allowed!
Ghosts hate light. If you bring any light in the building, your secret is forfeit!!
OH, COME ON!
BUT THE LETTER SAYS...
!

THAT'S RIGHT!
YEAH! LEAVE IT BEHIND, OKAY?
DON'T USE YOUR FLASHLIGHT. TURN IT OFF RIGHT NOW! PLEASE!
B-BUT...
SEE?
...ALL RIGHT.
CLICK
M.P.D.

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S FUNNY?
DR. OU?
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
!
AHA! AH HA HA HA!
HAH ♡
IT WAS SO EASY TO FIND OUT THAT THEY WERE ALL LYING...
HOW CAN YOU NOT LAUGH?
REMEMBER?
EVERYONE SAID THEY HAD NO SECRETS
BUT LOOK AT THEM. THEY'RE ALL FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE BLACK INVITATION
UM... WELL...

NOW, WHY DON'T YOU TELL THE TRUTH, EVERY-ONE?
OTHERWISE YOU'LL BE THE FIRST SUSPECTS...
...IF SOMEONE REALLY DIES LATER, LIKE THIS OFFICER SAID! HEE HEE HEE HEE...
♡
MAYBE IT'S *YOU* WHO CALLED US HERE, HUH?
RIGHT!
TSK!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD TIME...
IT'S *YOU* WHO LOOK THE MOST SUSPI-CIOUS!
I-I WASN'T CALLED HERE!
I'M HERE JUST TO SEE THE PROPERTY!
I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO TURN OFF THE FLASH-LIGHT...

HEY, MR. MONEY-LENDER! GIVE IT UP ALREADY!
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT WE'RE ALL HERE BECAUSE OF THE LETTER. ADMIT IT.
...
HEE HEE.
NOW, YOU, TOO. TURN OFF THE FLASHLIGHT...
...AND LEAVE IT THERE, OKAY? ♡
OH...
DAMN.


M.P.D.
カ
"
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"
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OW!
SORRY! BUT IT'S SO DARK HERE!
I CAN'T SEE ANY-THING.
HEY! STOP KICKING ME!

HELLO, OFFICER? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
Y-YES!
YEAH, I CAN'T EVEN SEE MY OWN HANDS.
WE HAVE TO FEEL OUR WAY ALONG THE WALL...
YOU HAVE A GUN, DON'T YOU?
I'M COUNTING ON YOU!
I'LL LEAD THE WAY, SO PLEASE WALK SLOWLY AND FOLLOW ME, OKAY?
DON'T WORRY! I WON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN.
SHE'S SO COOL UNDER PRESSURE. SHE'S GETTING MORE AND MORE LIKE A DETECTIVE...

INSPECTOR HIMURO, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
YES. EVERY WORD.
KEEP THE PHONE CONNECTED AND KEEP MOVING!
KEEP YOUR GUARD UP...

YES.
DID YOU LEAVE YOUR FLASH-LIGHT?
LIGHT IT WHEN I GIVE YOU THE SIGNAL.
THEN BORROW A LIGHTER FROM YOUR FIANCÉ.
YEAH...
DO YOU HAVE A LIGHTER, SHINGO?
All right?
RIGHT...
CAN I HAVE IT...?
SURE.

IT'S ONLY THE THIRD FLOOR...
IT'S GONNA BE A LONG WAY TO GO...
IT'S IN MY HAIR!
HA HA. THIS IS A GHOST BUILDING, AFTER ALL.
EEK!
JEEZ ...
SPIDER WEB... GREAT...
OH!

!!
WHOA! WHAT'S THIS SMOKE?!
AH!
BI
SH
WHOAA!
AAAAAAAH!
WHAT HAPPENED?!
AYAK!

COUGH COUGH
WHO KICKED THE FIRE EXTIN-GUISH-ER...?!
COUGH COUGH
COUGH
WHO DID THIS ...?
JEEZ/ GECK!
FIRE EXTIN-GUISH-ER...
OH, SHIT ...!
BE CAREFUL THERE MUST BE BROKEN GLASS, RUSTY NAILS AND OTHER HAZARDS IN A BUILDING LIKE THIS.
THE ROTTEN FLOOR OR CEILING COULD FALL IN, TOO.
HMM.
Looks like someone kicked a fire extinguisher!
It ruptured... there's powder everywhere... can't see...

WAIT... DID HE JUST MAKE A JOKE?
NOT FUNNY
AND OF COURSE... THERE'S THE EVER-PRESENT GHOSTS...
HEH.
Slowly...we went up the stairs...
...making our way by feeling the walls.
WE'RE ALMOST ON THE SEVENTH FLOOR, OFFICER...
...and were almost to the [illegible]th...
We passed the sixth floor...

EEEEEEEE!
HEEEEELP!!
SOMEONE'S
TRYING
TO KILL
MEEEEE!!
THERE'S NOTHING HERE...
HMPH. THIS WAS ALL A TRICK!
YOU'RE UPSET ABOUT THAT? DID YOU *WANT* SOMETHING HORRIBLE?

I-INSPECTOR! DID YOU HEAR THAT?!
THAT WAS A WOMAN'S SCREAM...
I heard.
Your cell phone has a loudspeaker in it, so I heard it very clearly.
RIGHT!
CLICK
HURRY, AYAKI!
...FIND WHERE THE SCREAM CAME FROM!
USE THE LIGHTER AND...
huff
huff
huff
huff

THERE'S A DOOR!
THIS MUST BE THE EAST END ROOM...
I THINK THE SCREAM...
...CAME FROM IN HERE!

READY?
GO FOR IT!
OKAY!
...AND AIM THE GUN, OKAY?
YOU STEP BACK...
ALL RIGHT!
OH...
KURUMI! I'LL OPEN THE DOOR!
AU...?
?!!
HUH ...?
I CAN'T SEE...IT'S TOO DARK IN HERE.
USE THE LIGHTER, SHINGO...
OH! RIGHT!
カチッ

EEEEK! SHE-- SHE'S DEAD!

FROM THE JOURNALS OF Kozaburo Himuro:

4:16 A.M.
I HAVE TO SAY I'M GLAD KURUMI'S BACK FROM HER "VACATION." ALTHOUGH, I MUST ADMIT THAT I WAS QUITE PROUD OF THE WAY SHE SOLVED THE MURDER AT THE BLOOD POND SPA. I THINK THAT AYAKI IS FINALLY STARTING TO REALIZE HER OWN POTENTIAL AS AN INVESTIGATOR--ALTHOUGH I'D BE HARD-PRESSED TO GET MYSELF TO SAY THAT TO HER IN PERSON.
AT LEAST THIS TIME I HAVE HER ON AN ACTUAL ASSIGNMENT, WHERE I CAN KEEP TABS ON HER. SEEMS THE THREAT AT THE "GHOST BUILDING" WAS NO HOPE PRANK. THERE'S A WOMAN'S BODY ON THE 7TH FLOOR AND A ROOMFUL OF SUSPECTS.BUT WITH MY HELP, KURUMI SHOULD BE ABLE TO CRACK THIS ONE BEFORE SUNRISE.

HIMURO AND AYAKI
ARE BACK ON THE CASE IN...

.remote.

VOLUME 9